

English Readings

SCOTT'S
LADY OF THE LAKE

HITCHCOCK

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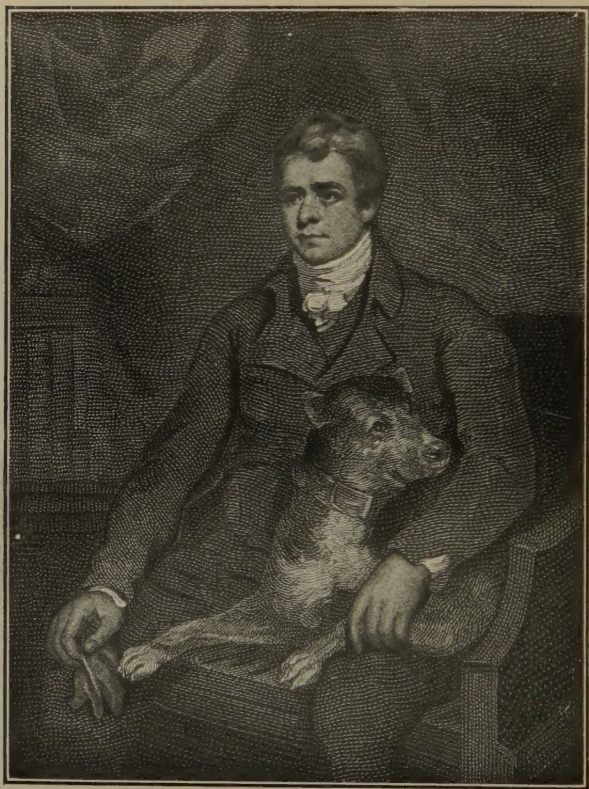
Chaucer.

English Readings

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Sir Walter Scott

Frontispiece of the first edition of *The Lady of the Lake*
An engraving by Heath after a portrait by Saxon

SCOTT'S
LADY OF THE LAKE

EDITED BY
ALFRED M. HITCHCOCK

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
HARTFORD PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL



NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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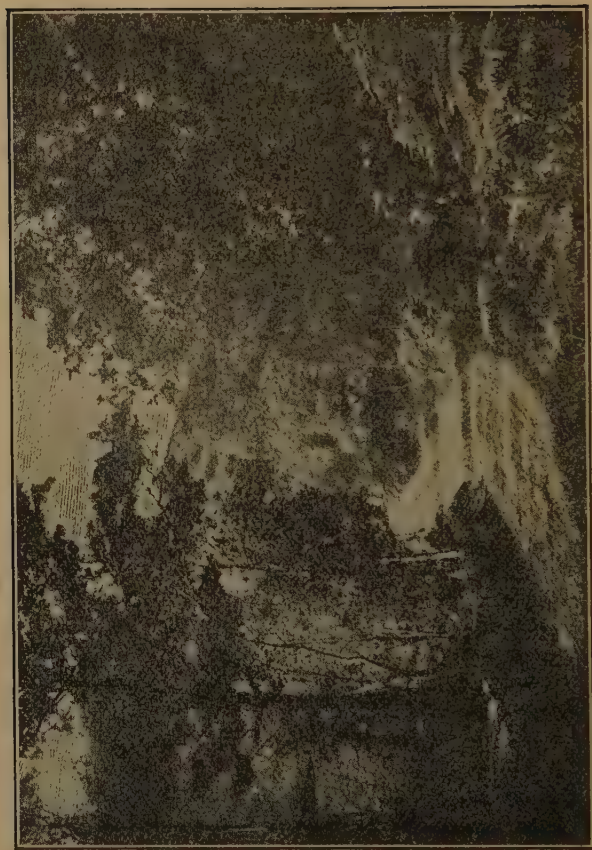
PREFATORY NOTE

In preparing the biographical sketch found in the Introduction I have relied mainly on Lockhart's *Life of Scott* and *The Dictionary of National Biography*. The text of the poem is that prepared many years ago by Dr. Rolfe and commonly accepted as best. It is used by his courteous permission, granted a few weeks before his death. The map follows somewhat closely one found in Paterson's *Handguide to Scotland*. Many of the notes are Scott's, given in full or in abridged form; and no doubt I am indebted in some instances to Taylor, Rolfe, and other editors of recognized scholarship. The questions are intended to be suggestive merely, indicating in a general way certain lines of profitable study. They are added to the notes not without misgivings; for though some are very simple, others call for more thought than the immature pupil possesses. It is hoped that the instructor will select wisely, omitting all that threaten to interfere with the enjoyment of the poem; and that in some cases the paragraphs explaining the meter of the poem—purposely placed at the end of the volume—will be omitted entirely.

A. M. H.

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In the Trossachs

INTRODUCTION

I

SCOTT'S LIFE AND WORKS

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771. His father was a moderately successful lawyer, his mother the daughter of a professor in Edinburgh University—plain people, upright in character and of more than average intelligence, but by no means prominent socially. The family was eventually a large one. A number of children died in infancy; Walter was the second of six, five boys and a girl, who lived to grow up.

His boyhood was in some ways unusual. When but eighteen months old a fever, which at the time caused little alarm, left him partially paralyzed in the right leg. It was thought that country air might help him to get well; so he was sent to live with his grandfather Scott, who was a farmer in a little village near Kelso in the Tweed country. Here he remained most of the time till he was eight years old. Thus his early boyhood days were spent away from home, among relatives who cared for him tenderly, petting him more, perhaps, than was best. He grew into a high-spirited, sturdy lad, without a trace of weakness save that he was lame—lame for life.

His education, necessarily, was somewhat irregular; that is, he attended a number of schools and at times was instructed at home by a tutor. No one ever called him a

dunce, yet he was never a brilliant pupil. In a biographical sketch written in later years Scott says of himself that he was an "incorrigibly idle imp, who was always longing to do something else than what was enjoined." Yet one of his masters speaks of his "sweetness and intelligence," surely a good combination. Testimony from many sources leaves the impression that he possessed more than average ability, that he excelled by fits and starts in whatever studies he liked, but that he preferred outdoor sports to lessons. Certain it is that his teachers were fond of him, and that among his mates he was a leader regarded with the affection and admiration schoolboys always feel for one who is not a prig, but a wholesome, good natured, spirited fellow, and no coward.

Education is not gained solely by attending school. Here are some of the things with which he had stored his mind before boyhood days were over. He had listened eagerly to many a tale of earlier times when the Border country between Scotland and England was the scene of stirring events—tales told by his Aunt Janet, by his grandmother, and by the shepherds at his grandfather's farm. Not a few of these concerned his own ancestors; for his mother was a descendant of many famous warriors, and his father's ancestors had been a "great riding and sporting and fighting clan." There were tales about a several-times-great-grandfather called John the Lamister (cripple); about William the Bolt-foot, a famous Border knight; and about Auld Wat Scott of Harden. Auld Wat's son Will, so runs the legend, was once captured while raiding the lands of Sir Gideon Murray, who gave him his choice between swinging from a gallows and marrying the homeliest of his four homely daughters. It took the handsome young Scot three days to decide, but in the end he took "Mickle-

mouthed Meg"—and Will and Meg lived happily ever after. Will's grandson bore the nickname "Beardie," for he kept a vow that never would he shave unless the banished Stuarts were restored to power.

Many of the romantic tales which delighted his fancy were found in old ballads, and for ballads Walter soon developed a passion, though he could not sing them, for he never could "hold a tune." He sought them as eagerly as some boys now-a-days collect stamps or Indian relics. They became his hobby. And in his search for ballads, many of which had never been printed but had been passed down orally from generation to generation, he made, first and last, many excursions through the Border country, thus becoming acquainted with a region of great natural beauty and equally great historic interest.

Moreover he was a reading boy, exceedingly fond of history, particularly the history of Scotland, and of romantic tales and stirring poetry. A list of the books read by Scott before he became a man would seem remarkable to most American boys, because of its wide range and its high quality. Whatever was romantic in prose or poetry, especially if it told of olden times, fascinated him, and whatever he really liked his wonderful memory retained. It should be noted, too, that he possessed, even when a boy, wonderful skill in retelling what he had read or listened to, and in describing scenes that had delighted his eye.

At the age of twelve, having passed through what was known as the Edinburgh Grammar or High School, where in all branches, save possibly Latin, the studies were of course more elementary than in our American high schools, he entered the University, his mind well stored with many things not found in text-books. Here his work was quite as irregular as in the lower schools; he attended but few

classes and only for a year or two. When fifteen, he was apprenticed to his father, and at twenty-one, after an apprenticeship of six years, he was called to the bar; that is, he became an advocate.

This long apprenticeship, Scott declares, was an excellent thing for him, since it taught him to be industrious and methodical even when doing uninteresting things. Law was not actually distasteful, yet it never became an absorbing interest; without neglecting duties in his father's office, he found time for other things more to his liking. He continued to read many books. He studied, superficially, several modern languages. His love for ballads and for history grew till he became an antiquary of no mean attainments. Yet he was never what may be called a book-worm, for he was fond of lively company and became a favorite socially among the better people of Edinburgh. Many were the long rambles that he took with a few jovial companions through the surrounding country, rambles that further familiarized him with romantic scenes and added to his collection of ballads. His tall, athletic figure became known far and wide, and many tales are told of the roaring fun attending these walking tours.

Nominally Scott kept to the law for fourteen years, or until he was thirty-five. His practice, however, was never large. No doubt he would have succeeded better had he led a life less gay—had joined fewer clubs, made fewer "raids" with lively companions in Liddesdale, and devoted less time to his hobbies. Such a life made him exceedingly popular, particularly with the members of a volunteer company of cavalry who elected him quartermaster; it did not bring him many clients. At twenty-eight he was appointed deputy sheriff of Selkirkshire with a salary of £300, though the duties required but little time; and seven

years later he was elected clerk of Quarter Sessions, a court held quarterly by the justices of the peace of the county. This latter office, which he held practically as long as he lived, kept him busy in Edinburgh six months in the year. It brought an additional salary of £1500. Thus Scott became a man of some importance socially and in public affairs. He was fortunate financially. An uncle left him a substantial legacy. Moreover his wife—when twenty-six Scott married a Miss Carpenter, daughter of a French refugee, whom he met while making a tour of the English lake region—possessed an annuity of £500. He stands, therefore, in marked contrast to many who have gained a livelihood solely by their pens. As he once expressed it, writing was to him not a crutch but a staff.

Scott's literary career began when he was twenty-five and continued till his death, thirty-six years later. First came a little volume containing two ballads translated from the German. Soon after appeared a work in three volumes entitled *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This was but his collection of ballads which, as we have seen, had been growing through many years. It was well received, especially in Scotland, and won for the collector a well-deserved reputation as an antiquary. Encouraged by this success, he published, two years later, a romantic poem in six cantos entitled *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, first of eight long poems which appeared during a period of twelve years, the last being *Harold the Dauntless* (1817). The best of these are the first three, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, and *The Lady of the Lake*.

It is difficult in these days, when poetry is read so little, to realize how very popular Scott's poems were. The sales were phenomenal, the greatest then known in the annals of English literature. Wherever English was spoken, this

new minstrel of the North became a favorite. His spirited tales, so different from anything that had previously appeared, captivated hundreds of thousands of readers, old and young. Thus the none too successful Edinburgh advocate, deputy sheriff of Selkirkshire and clerk of Quarter Sessions, became famous. The secret of that fame we find, partly at least, in his boyhood fancy for old tales, old rimes, and romantic scenes.

Quite as remarkable as Scott's rapid rise to unprecedented popularity as a poet was his abrupt abandonment of poetry. *Harold the Dauntless* was his last poem of importance; the remaining fifteen years of his life were devoted almost exclusively to prose. The reason for such a change Scott has given very frankly. Readers, at first so captivated, grew tired of romantic tales in imitation of the old-time minstrelsy. They preferred the new poet Byron, whose rise to popularity was even more wonderful than Scott's. Phenomenal as were the sales of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and the other earlier poems, the later ones found a less ready market. Plainly it was time to try a new field or abandon writing altogether.

In 1814, three years before the last of the long poems was published, the first novel appeared. It was *Waverley*, an historical romance in which Charles the Pretender is a prominent figure. It was issued anonymously, for the poet half feared this new venture would prove a failure. But his fears were groundless. His success as poet was quite eclipsed by this new success. Who is this Great Unknown? readers were asking. For many years the secret was kept by author and publisher, though Scott was often suspected. In all there are about thirty of the so-called *Waverley* novels, the last, *Castle Dangerous*, appearing in 1832, the year of Scott's death. They form a

wonderful series of historical romances, the most brilliant known to the annals of literature. In time, they range from *Count Robert of Paris* (1090) to *St. Ronan's Well*, a tale of 1800. The first nine deal with dramatic incidents in Scottish history; the tenth, perhaps best known of all, is *Ivanhoe*, the scene of which is laid in England in the days of Richard the Lion-hearted. Scott seems equally at home in Scotland, England, or on the Continent. The secret of this wonderful power we find again in his early love for history and the "picturesque and vanishing forms of society."

Brilliant as was Scott's success as poet and novelist, his life as a private gentleman is in many ways more interesting. It is not a little surprising to learn that to him his many books were but a secondary matter; that though he was not indifferent to fame as a writer, his fondest ambition lay in another direction. Since early manhood, we are told, it had been his dream to become a great landowner and live somewhat grandly in a spacious mansion, entertaining a host of friends with open-handed hospitality—in short to lead a life resembling in some measure that of a feudal lord, the chief of a clan. This dream was all but realized.

For a time after his marriage he lived in or near Edinburgh, but early in his career as poet he leased a small farm called Ashestiel, on the south bank of the Tweed, a few miles from the little town of Selkirk. Here he remained eight years (1804-12). The first three of the long poems were written at Ashestiel, and here too his four children were born. It was a happy period in Scott's life, and one of great industry. So rapid was his rise that, when at length his lease expired, he felt justified in purchasing for £4000 a little estate, five miles farther down the river and

not far from the beautiful ruins of Melrose Abbey. This was the beginning of what was afterwards called Abbotsford. "The farm," writes the biographer Lockhart, "consisted of a meadow or *haugh* along the banks of the river, and a tract of undulated ground behind, all in a neglected state, undrained, wretchedly enclosed, much of it covered with the native heath. The house was small and poor, with a common *kail yard* on one flank, and a staring barn on the other; while in front appeared a filthy pond covered with ducks and duckweed, from which the whole tenement had derived the unharmonious designation of *Clarty Hole*." But soon the farmhouse was transformed into a substantial cottage, and the cottage in time grew into a great mansion, quite a castle in fact. Not only were the lands improved but, as large sums were received from his romances, adjoining estates were purchased till twelve years later, when Abbotsford was completed, its total cost had mounted to £76,000.

But the story of Abbotsford is well known—how for many years this great-hearted man of tremendous industry lived happily on his ever-growing estate, superintending every detail in its improvement, turning out book after book at a rate truly phenomenal, yet never lacking time to entertain his many friends. It was "open house" from one year's end to the other. Equally well known is the great blow which fell when the printing and publishing establishments in which for years Scott had been a silent partner failed, leaving him a bankrupt owing £120,000.

The blow was sufficient to have killed an ordinary man, and no doubt it shortened Sir Walter's life. (Sir Walter he had been since 1820, for among other honors he had been made baronet.) But Scott was not an ordinary man. His pluck asserted itself. He was fifty-five, his health beginning

to show the effect of years of over-work; yet he set out resolutely determined to pay every penny. Wealthy friends, and strangers even, rallied to his support. The poor harper who had taught his two daughters offered all that he possessed, a few hundred pounds. Had Scott so desired, the debt might have been paid in a few months, so great was the affection with which he was regarded by all. But Scott accepted no gifts. Fortunately his family was provided for; and Abbotsford was saved, since it was entailed—settled upon his son, who had married an heiress a few years before the blow fell. But strict economy became necessary. Many servants were dismissed, a few willingly remaining even though they received lower wages. And Scott, shattered in health, worried moreover because of the serious illness of his wife, settled down to work with a persistence truly wonderful. So remarkable was his literary industry that, incredible as it may seem, it is estimated that in two years £40,000 of his indebtedness had been paid.

But such exertion could not continue long. His health failed rapidly after Lady Scott's death in 1826. In 1831, having partially recovered from a paralytic shock of the previous year, he tried the effect of a Mediterranean cruise. In 1832, home again in Abbotsford, he died. It is comforting to know that Sir Walter passed away believing that the one great desire of his declining years—the payment of his debts—had been accomplished. In a way he was right in so thinking; for though £50,000 remained unpaid, a large insurance policy and the sale of valuable copyrights canceled every obligation, not long after this great and good man was laid to rest amid the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, a few miles down the Tweed from Abbotsford.

Where shall we place Scott among English writers?

Of the poets, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, and Burns came before him; Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats were contemporaries; Tennyson and Browning came a little later. Among writers of prose fiction he is preceded by Defoe, Swift, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, and Miss Burney; he is first of the four great novelists of the nineteenth century—Scott, Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray. To be admitted at all to membership in the company of these great names is high honor. Although he does not rank among the greatest poets, no one has ever excelled him in writing long romantic poems such as *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*. They have their faults, which even young readers may readily discover; but poems which have held popular favor for a century must possess sterling merits which should prompt us to overlook their faults. His novels too are not above criticism. To the reader of to-day they seem long drawn out, the narrative impeded by too much antiquarian detail. The close student complains that the romancer's love for the past led him to idealize, making historical personages more heroic and lovable than facts will warrant; that the story-teller's instinct led him to color historical incidents in such a way as to convey wrong impressions. After all has been said, however, his novels remain the most brilliant series of historical romances the world has ever seen.

And what of Scott the man? Again we may pick flaws here and there. He was not perfect. There are high levels which his ideals never reached. Yet no one can read his works and Lockhart's wonderful biography without gaining the impression that his character and his life, when looked at broadly, were clean and noble. We admire his tremendous energy. His duties as sheriff and as clerk

of Quarter Sessions were enough for one man to perform; yet he found time to write scores of volumes, time to develop a miserable little farm into the large and well ordered estate of Abbotsford, besides keeping up a wide correspondence and entertaining an exceptionally large circle of friends. We admire his democratic spirit and his warm heart; for though his sympathies were strong for aristocracy, and he enjoyed associating with people of high rank and social prominence, he never appeared to better advantage than when among the laborers in the fields at Abbotsford or chatting at the door of a cottage. He was at home, apparently, among all classes, unrestrained yet retaining his dignity, a great favorite among the peasants. Finally we admire his sense of honor. He could not do a mean thing—desert a friend, take advantage of another in business transactions, or even shut his eyes to an opportunity to aid a stranger in distress. It is altogether fitting that in the beautiful capital of the Scotland he loved so dearly and served so well, there should be, casting its shadow on her most beautiful thoroughfare, a tall, graceful, dignified monument erected in his memory. It is, in part, a tribute to his skill as a writer, but in greater part, we may believe, to his strong, wholesome, manly character.

II

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

This, the third of the longer poems and by many considered the best, was written during what was doubtless the happiest period of Scott's life. He was in full physical and mental vigor. He had an assured income sufficiently large to relieve him of all serious worry. He was comfortably established in a new home, Ashiestiel, concerning

which Lockhart writes as follows: "A more beautiful situation for the residence of a poet could not be conceived. The house was then a small one, but, compared with the cottage at Lasswade [where Scott had lived previous to coming to Ashiestiel], its accommodations were amply sufficient. You approached it through an old-fashioned garden, with holly hedges, and broad, green, terrace walks. On one side, close under the windows, is a deep ravine, clothed with venerable trees, down which a mountain rivulet is heard, more than seen, in its progress to the Tweed. The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest verdure. Opposite, and all around, are the green hills. The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose. The heights immediately behind are those which divide the Tweed from the Yarrow; and the latter celebrated stream lies within an easy ride, in the course of which the traveler passes through a variety of the finest mountain scenery in the south of Scotland. No town is within seven miles but Selkirk, which was then still smaller and quieter than it is now; there was hardly even a gentleman's family within visiting distance, except at Yair, a few miles lower on the Tweed, the ancient seat of the Pringles of Whytbank, and at Bowhil, between the Yarrow and Ettrick, where the Earl of Dalkeith used occasionally to inhabit a small shooting-lodge, which has since grown into a ducal residence. The country all around, with here and there an insignificant exception, belongs to the Buccleugh estate; so that, whichever way he chose to turn, the bard of the clan had ample room and verge enough for every variety of field sport; and being then in the prime vigor of manhood, he was not slow to profit by these advantages. Meantime the concerns of his own

little farm, and the care of his absent relative's woods, gave him healthful occupation in the intervals of the chase; and he had long, solitary evenings for the uninterrupted exercise of his pen; perhaps, on the whole, better opportunities for study than he had ever enjoyed before, or was to meet with elsewhere in later days."

Surely Lockhart's account pictures an ideal retreat for a poet of Scott's temperament. As we read still further the details of his daily life—how with the help of two faithful servants, "honest" Tom Purdie, ex-poacher, and Peter Mathieson the coachman, he busied himself about his little farm, yet found time for hunting and fishing and excursions through the surrounding country, and of how he played with his children and directed their education along wholesome lines, the impression is strengthened that conditions were most favorable for successful composition. Nor should we forget how well equipped Scott was for writing this particular poem. He knew Scottish history thoroughly, and the antiquarian researches in which he had taken such pleasure even from boyhood days made him thoroughly familiar with the manners and customs of earlier times. Moreover he knew the entire Lake region, the scene of his story, remarkably well; for in earlier days he had taken many a ramble through the country bordering Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond. And before beginning the romance, we are told, he revisited every locality mentioned in the story, carefully noting the natural beauty, and even making sure, by means of a furious gallop, how long it should take his hero to ride at full speed from Loch Vennachar to Stirling. The account of the chase, with which the poem begins, was written before his return to Ashestiel, while pictures of the region were still fresh in his memory.

The reception of the poem, on its publication in May, 1810, was remarkable. "The whole country rang with the praises of the poet," writes a publisher of that day. "Crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown; and as the book came out just before the season for excursions, every house and inn in that neighborhood was crammed with a constant succession of visitors." During the first twelve months the sales amounted to 20,000 copies. Nor was the success of the poem temporary; it has remained a favorite with old and young ever since.

The poem owes its charm to many causes. The scenes are laid in a region of romantic beauty which, as has been noted, Scott knew and loved and possessed the power to describe with wonderful fidelity. Thousands of tourists continue to visit Loch Katrine every year, lured by his descriptions of loch and ben, and *The Lady of the Lake* is found to be a reliable guidebook. Equally successful is Scott the antiquary in picturing the life of the Highlander of earlier, more stirring times, selecting with a poet's instinct, and a lover's too, whatever is calculated to win the interest and the sympathy of his readers. Moreover the story, with its slight historical coloring, is well worth telling. From the opening stanzas in which the hunt is so graphically described, to the concluding scene in Stirling Castle, interest does not lag. To be sure it is but a romance with the haze of long ago clinging to it; and true love, brave deeds, noble generosity, plumed knights in disguise, fair maidens in distress, mystery approaching the supernatural—all these are the familiar trappings of story-telling. Yet the world goes back to them with pleasure, finding them a relief after the multitude of novels which strive to picture the real world of to-day in which plumed lovers of royal

blood no longer present rings to rustic maids, and the supernatural has disappeared before the march of trade and invention.

There is a charm, too, in the vehicle of the story; the verse which the poet employs casts a wonderful spell. Careless at times, never showing the finish found in the works of the greater poets, nevertheless its swing and melody are captivating. The lines cling in the memory, and we find ourselves repeating favorite passages when other and greater poems have been forgotten. Sir Walter could not "hold a tune," but he knew how so to use words as to produce perhaps not the sweeter, more deeply emotional melody of flute and violin, but the stirring music of pibroch and drum.

Finally—and this is true in large measure not only of the poems but of the novels as well—although we may not think of Scott as we read his lines, unconsciously we feel his presence and like it—the presence of a strong, manly man, fond of things that wholesome manhood should be fond of, brave and generous like his heroes. We feel, as we leave the storyteller, that we have been in good company.

DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, first published in seven volumes but afterwards condensed to one, and the still briefer account found in the *Dictionary of National Biography* are the recognized authorities in matters pertaining to Scott. The Cambridge edition of the poems (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) and the Temple edition of the novels (J. M. Dent & Co.) are good editions to buy for the home or school library. The list of Scott's works found in the *Dictionary of National Biography* contains over sixty titles, including the eight longer poems, thirty or more novels and tales, lives of Napoleon, Swift, and Dryden, and many miscellaneous works. The following descriptive catalogue is not complete, its purpose being to call attention to the principal works. A more extended account of the novels is to be found in *A Descriptive Guide to the Best Fiction*, by Ernest A. Baker (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.), and in *The Waverley Dictionary*, by May Rogers (S. C. Griggs & Co.).

POETRY

1802-3. *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

A collection in three volumes of "the poetical antiquities of the Border," with introductory essays and many notes. It contains, one critic has said, "the elements of a hundred historical romances."

1805. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

A seventeenth century Border tale of love and warfare, in which an elfin page plays an important part.

1808. *Marmion*.

A tale of true love and false, of intrigue, disguise, fighting. The concluding scene is at the battle of Flodden Field (1513).

1810. *The Lady of the Lake.*

1811. *The Vision of Don Roderick.*

The last of the Gothic kings sees in a vision the future of Spain. It is a poem of little merit.

1812. *Rokeby.*

A Yorkshire tale of the year 1644. This is not one of Scott's best, yet there are many fine passages. The ending is most tragic.

1813. *The Bridal of Triermain.*

A "sleeping beauty" tale about Gyneth, daughter of King Arthur, who is wakened from a trance five centuries long by brave Sir Roland de Vaux.

1815. *The Lord of the Isles.*

A stirring tale in which Robert Bruce appears. The concluding scene is at the battle of Bannockburn.

1817. *Harold the Dauntless.*

This is the last of Scott's long poems and perhaps the poorest. The hero is a Dane who was "rocked on a buckler and fed from a blade"; the heroine a Danish maiden who follows him through many perils, disguised as a page.

NOVELS

1814. *Waverley.*

A Scottish romance having as its historical background the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Among the principal characters is Prince Charles the Pretender.

1815. *Guy Mannering.*

The central figure is a retired English officer interested in astrology. Dandie Dinmont, Dominie Sampson, Meg Merrilies the Gypsy, and Dick Hatteraick the smuggler are well-drawn characters. The time of the story is 1750-70.

1816. *The Antiquary.*

This, like the preceding, furnishes attractive pictures of Scottish manners in the latter half of the eighteenth century. It was Scott's favorite.

1816. *The Black Dwarf*.

A Border tale of the early seventeenth century.

1816. *Old Mortality*.

This, one of Scott's best, tells of the Covenanters' Rebellion in 1679. It was Tennyson's favorite.

1818. *Rob Roy*.

The central historical figure, Rob Roy, is the Robin Hood of Scotland. The heroine, Diana Vernon, is fascinating, and Baillie Nicol Jarvie one of the best of Scott's humorous characters. The time of the story, 1715.

1818. *The Heart of Midlothian*.

The pathetic story of Effie Deans and her brave sister Jeanie, perhaps the noblest of all Scott's heroines; the time, 1736. It is a favorite with most readers.

1819. *The Bride of Lammermoor*.

A tragic love tale of the late seventeenth century, by some critics considered the most finished of the Waverley novels.

1819. *A Legend of Montrose*.

A tale of the Civil War, 1645-46. It contains the well-known character Dugald Dalgetty.

1819. *Ivanhoe*.

This is the first of Scott's English romances. The time of the story is 1194; the principal characters, known to every schoolboy, are Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Robin Hood, Ivanhoe, the Jewess Rebecca, and the Saxon Rowena.

1820. *The Monastery*.

A Border romance, the principal events occurring on Tweedside. A tame story.

1820. *The Abbot*.

Sequel to *The Monastery*. The central figure is the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, whose portrait is drawn with great care. The time, 1567-68.

1821. *Kenilworth*.

Second of the English romances. The central historical figure is Queen Elizabeth, whose character is admirably portrayed. The reader's interest is divided between the graphic account of "courtly

gaeties and splendor" and the pathetic story of the life of Amy Robsart. Raleigh and Shakespeare are introduced.

1822. *The Pirate.*

The scene of the story is the Orkney and Shetland Islands. The plot of the romance was suggested by the career of a pirate executed in 1725.

1822. *The Fortunes of Nigel.*

The scene of the story is London during the reign of James I, whose character is portrayed in a masterly way. Nigel, a young Scotch nobleman seeking his fortune, is an attractive hero.

1823. *Peveril of the Peak.*

A tiresome, poorly constructed novel, the scenes laid for the most part in Derbyshire and the Isle of Man. It contains fairly good pictures of the times of Charles II.

1823. *Quentin Durward.*

First of the Continental romances, most of the scenes being laid in the border districts of France and Flanders, during the times of Louis XI and Charles the Bold. The hero is a young Scotchman. This is considered one of Scott's best. It is said to have inspired Dumas to write historical romances.

1824. *St. Ronan's Well.*

Scott's only society novel, the scene laid in upper Tweeddale, the time 1800. It is a poor tale, though one of the actors, Meg Dods, is among the best of Scott's humorous characters.

1824. *Redgauntlet.*

Another Scottish romance in which Bonnie Prince Charlie appears.

1825. *The Betrothed.*

The scene of this story is a Norman castle on the border of Wales during the reign of Henry II (1187).

1825. *The Talisman.*

Like the preceding, this is a tale of the Crusaders. The scene is Palestine. Richard Coeur-de-Lion again appears. Of course there is a young Scottish hero.

1826. *Woodstock.*

A story of the English Civil War and Commonwealth period, with Cromwell the central historical figure.

1827. *The Surgeon's Daughter.*

Published with *The Two Drovers* and *The Highland Widow* in the first series of *Chronicles of the Canongate*. These are short novels, little read.

1828. *The Fair Maid of Perth.*

A St. Valentine's romance, Scotch, of the year 1402.

1829. *Anne of Geierstein.*

The scenes are laid in France, Germany, and Switzerland during the latter half of the fifteenth century. The historical background is the war between Charles of Burgundy and the Swiss.

1832. *Count Robert of Paris.*

Another tale of the Crusaders, the scene laid in Constantinople.

1832. *Castle Dangerous.*

Published with the preceding. A fourteenth century tale of the Castle of the Black Douglas, called the Perilous because three times taken from the English. It is the last of Scott's novels and one of the poorest.

MISCELLANEOUS

1808. *Life of Dryden.*1814. *Life of Swift.*1821. *Lives of the Novelists.*

Biographical sketches written to accompany an edition of the British novelists.

1827. *Life of Napoleon.*

Published in nine volumes. Scott the biographer is less successful than Scott the romancer.

1828-30. *Tales of a Grandfather.*

History in storied form for young readers. Issued in four series.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE



Glenartney

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

CANTO FIRST

THE CHASE

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string,—
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon, 10
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful or subdued the proud.
At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray. 20
O, wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay.

Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made 30
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II

As Chief who hears his warder call,
'To arms! the foemen storm the wall,'
The antlered monarch of the waste 40
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dewdrops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky:
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared, 50
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III

Yelled on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
Clattered a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices joined the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe;
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

60

70

IV

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern where, 'tis told,
A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer
Scarce half the lessening pack was near,
So shrewdly on the mountain-side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

80

V

The noble stag was pausing now
 Upon the mountain's southern brow,
 Where broad extended, far beneath,
 The varied realms of fair Menteith.
 With anxious eye he wandered o'er 90
 Mountain and meadow, moss and moor;
 And pondered refuge from his toil
 By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
 But nearer was the copsewood gray
 That waved and wept on Loch Achray,
 And mingled with the pine-trees blue
 On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
 Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
 With flying foot the heath he spurned,
 Held westward with unwearied race, 100
 And left behind the panting chase.

VI

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er
 As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;
 What reins were tightened in despair,
 When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
 Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
 Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith,—
 For twice that day, from shore to shore,
 The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
 Few were the stragglers, following far, 110
 That reached the lake of Vennachar;
 And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
 The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
 That horseman plied the scourge and steel;

For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The laboring stag strained full in view,
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed, 120
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take. 130

VIII

The Hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew;—
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared, 140
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,

He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain, 150
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX

Close on the hounds the Hunter came, ·
To cheer them on the vanished game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labors o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touched with pity and remorse, 160
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
'I little thought, when first thy rein
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant gray!'

X

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace, 170
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,

Round and around the sounds were cast
Till echo seemed an answering blast;
And on the Hunter hied his way, 180
To join some comrades of the day,
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

XI

The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid, 190
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set 200
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes 210
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
 Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
 Here eglantine embalmed the air,
 Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
 The primrose pale and violet flower
 Found in each clift a narrow bower;
 Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
 Emblems of punishment and pride,
 Grouped their dark hues with every stain 220
 The weather-beaten crags retain.
 With boughs that quaked at every breath,
 Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;
 Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
 Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
 And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
 His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
 Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
 His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
 Highest of all, where white peaks glanced, 230
 Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
 The wanderer's eye could barely view
 The summer heaven's delicious blue;
 So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
 The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
 A narrow inlet, still and deep,
 Affording scarce such breadth of brim
 As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
 Lost for a space, through thickets veering, 240
 But broader when again appearing,
 Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
 Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;

And farther as the Hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

250

XIV

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb with footing nice
A far-projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down to the lake in masses threw
Crag, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruined sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

260

270

XV

From the steep promontory gazed
 The stranger, raptured and amazed,
 And, 'What a scene were here,' he cried, 280
 'For princely pomp or churchman's pride!
 On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
 In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
 On yonder meadow far away,
 The turrets of a cloister gray.
 How blithely might the bugle-horn
 Chide on the lake the lingering morn!
 How sweet at eve the lover's lute
 Chime when the groves were still and mute!
 And when the midnight moon should lave 290
 Her forehead in the silver wave,
 How solemn on the ear would come
 The holy matins' distant hum,
 While the deep peal's commanding tone
 Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
 A sainted hermit from his cell,
 To drop a bead with every knell!
 And bugle, lute, and bell, and all
 Should each bewildered stranger call
 To friendly feast and lighted hall. 300

XVI

'Blithe were it then to wander here!
 But now—beshrew yon nimble deer—
 Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
 The copse must give my evening fare;
 Some mossy bank my couch must be,
 Some rustling oak my canopy.
 Yet pass we that; the war and chase
 Give little choice of resting-place.

A summer night in greenwood spent
Were but tomorrow's merriment. 310
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better missed than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.
I am alone; my bugle-strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried.'

XVII

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound, 320
From underneath an aged oak
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow. 330
The boat had touched this silver strand
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art, 340
In listening mood she seemed to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace
Of finer form or lovelier face!
What though the sun with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow. 350
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread.
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear! 360

XIX

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind. 370
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;

Not Katrine in her mirror blue
Gives back the shaggy banks more true
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast,
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unrevealed
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
O, need I tell that passion's name?

380

XX

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne.
'Father!' she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused; no answer came.
'Malcolm, was thine the blast?' The name
Less resolutely uttered fell;
The echoes could not catch the swell.
'A stranger I,' the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar
Pushed her light shallop from the shore,
And when a space was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen;—
So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

390

400

XXI

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage, 410
Yet had not quenched the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponless except his blade, 420
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armor trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy,
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command. 430

XXII

Awhile the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied
That Highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
'Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home.
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled, 440

And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer.'—
'Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has erred,' he said;
'No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand
I found a fay in fairy land!'

450

XXIII

'I well believe,' the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the side,—
'I well believe that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight,—
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
Was on the visioned future bent.
He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
That tasselled horn so gayly gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne.'

460

470

XXIV

The stranger smiled.—‘Since to your home
 A destined errant-knight I come,
 Announced by prophet sooth and old,
 Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
 I’ll lightly front each high emprise
 For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
 Permit me first the task to guide
 Your fairy frigate o’er the tide.’
 The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
 The toil unwonted saw him try;
 For seldom, sure, if e’er before,
 His noble hand had grasped an oar.
 Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
 And o’er the lake the shallop flew;
 With heads erect and whimpering cry,
 The hounds behind their passage ply.
 Nor frequent does the bright oar break
 The darkening mirror of the lake
 Until the rocky isle they reach,
 And moor their shallop on the beach.

48σ

49σ

XXV

The stranger viewed the shore around;
 ’Twas all so close with copsewood bound,
 Nor track nor pathway might declare
 That human foot frequented there,
 Until the mountain maiden showed
 A clambering unsuspected road,
 That winded through the tangled screen
 And opened on a narrow green,
 Where weeping birch and willow round
 With their long fibres swept the ground.
 Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
 Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

50σ

XXVI

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device,
Of such materials as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared, 510
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees overhead
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green, 520
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favored flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she stayed, 530
And gayly to the stranger said,
'On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!'

XXVII

'My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee!
He crossed the threshold,—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.

To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
When on the floor he saw displayed, 540
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusked trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died, 550
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
That blackening streaks of blood retained,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

XXVIII

The wondering stranger round him gazed, 560
And next the fallen weapon raised;
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayed,
'I never knew but one,' he said,
'Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.'
She sighed, then smiled and took the word:
'You see the guardian champion's sword;
As light it trembles in his hand 570
As in my grasp a hazel wand.

My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart,
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old.'

XXIX

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame,
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew, 580
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names, 590
'The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil.
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer, 600
Lost his good steed, and wandered here.'

XXX

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.

Well showed the elder lady's mien
 That courts and cities she had seen;
 Ellen, though more her looks displayed
 The simple grace of sylvan maid,
 In speech and gesture, form and face,
 Showed she was come of gentle race. .
 'Twere strange in ruder rank to find 610
 Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
 Each hint the Knight of Snowdown gave,
 Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
 Or Ellen, innocently gay,
 Turned all inquiry light away:—
 'Weird women we! By dale and down
 We dwell, afar from tower and town.
 We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
 On wandering knights our spells we cast;
 While viewless minstrels touch the string, 620
 'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing.'
 She sung, and still a harp unseen
 Filled up the symphony between.

XXXI

SONG

'Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
 Dream of battled fields no more,
 Days of danger, nights of waking.
 In our isle's enchanted hall,
 Hands unseen thy couch are strewing;
 Fairy strains of music fall, 630
 Every sense in slumber dewing.
 Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Dream of fighting fields no more;
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
 Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

'No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang or war-steed champing;
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.'

640

XXXII

She paused,—then, blushing, led the lay
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

650

SONG CONTINUED

'Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.'

660

XXXIII

The hall was cleared,—the stranger's bed
 Was there of mountain heather spread,
 Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
 And dreamed their forest sports again.
 But vainly did the heath-flower shed 670
 Its moorland fragrance round his head;
 Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
 The fever of his troubled breast.
 In broken dreams the image rose
 Of varied perils, pains, and woes.
 His steed now flounders in the brake,
 Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
 Now, leader of a broken host,
 His standard falls, his honor's lost.
 Then,—from my couch may heavenly might 680
 Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
 Again returned the scenes of youth,
 Of confident, undoubting truth;
 Again his soul he interchanged
 With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
 They come, in dim procession led,
 The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
 As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
 As if they parted yesterday.
 And doubt distracts him at the view,— 690
 O were his senses false or true?
 Dreamed he of death or broken vow,
 Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV

At length, with Ellen in a grove
 He seemed to walk and speak of love.
 She listened with a blush and sigh;
 His suit was warm, his hopes were high.

He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
 And a cold gauntlet met his grasp.
 The phantom's sex was changed and gone, 700
 Upon its head a helmet shone;
 Slowly enlarged to giant size,
 With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
 The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
 To Ellen still a likeness bore.
 He woke, and, panting with affright,
 Recalled the vision of the night.
 The hearth's decaying brands were red,
 And deep and dusky lustre shed,
 Half showing, half concealing, all 710
 The uncouth trophies of the hall.
 Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
 Where that huge falchion hung on high,
 And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
 Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
 Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
 He rose and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom
 Wasted around their rich perfume;
 The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm; 720
 The aspens slept beneath the calm;
 The silver light, with quivering glance,
 Played on the water's still expanse.
 Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
 Could rage beneath the sober ray!
 He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
 While thus he communed with his breast:
 'Why is it at each turn I trace
 Some memory of that exiled race?
 Can I not mountain maiden spy 730
 But she must bear the Douglas eye?

Can I not view a Highland brand
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more,—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.'
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Benvenue.

74-



Loch Katrine and Ellen's Isle

CANTO SECOND

THE ISLAND

I

AT morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel gray,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mixed with the sounding harp, O white-haired Allan-bane!

II

SONG

'Not faster yonder rowers' might 10
 Flings from their oars the spray,
 Not faster yonder rippling bright,
 That tracks the shallop's course in light,
 Melts in the lake away,
 Than men from memory erase
 The benefits of former days.
 Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
 Nor think again of the lonely isle.

'High place to thee in royal court,
 High place in battled line, 20
 Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport!
 Where beauty sees the brave resort,
 The honored meed be thine!
 True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
 Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
 And lost in love's and friendship's smile
 Be memory of the lonely isle!

III

SONG CONTINUED

'But if beneath yon southern sky
 A plaided stranger roam,
 Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh, 30
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye
 Pine for his Highland home;
 Then, warrior, then be thine to show
 The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
 Remember then thy hap erewhile,
 A stranger in the lonely isle.
 Or if on life's uncertain main
 Mishap shall mar thy sail;

If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
But come where kindred worth shall smile,
To greet thee in the lonely isle.' 40

IV

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reached the mainland side;
And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach 50
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, gray, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seemed watching the awakening fire.
So still he sat as those who wait 60
Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;
So still, as life itself were fled
In the last sound his harp had sped.

V

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sat and smiled.
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,

While her vexed spaniel from the beach
 Bayed at the prize beyond his reach? 70
 Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
 Why deepened on her cheek the rose?
 Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
 Perchance the maiden smiled to see
 Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
 And stop and turn to wave anew;
 And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
 Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
 Show me the fair would scorn to spy 80
 And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI

While yet he loitered on the spot,
 It seemed as Ellen marked him not;
 But when he turned him to the glade,
 One courteous parting sign she made;
 And after, oft the knight would say
 That not when prize of festal day
 Was dealt him by the brightest fair
 Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
 So highly did his bosom swell 90
 As at that simple mute farewell.
 Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
 And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
 He parts. The maid, unconscious still,
 Watched him wind slowly round the hill;
 But when his stately form was hid,
 The guardian in her bosom chid,—
 'Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!
 ('Twas thus upbraiding conscience said)
 'Not so had Malcolm idly hung 100
 On the smooth phrase of Southern tongue;
 Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
 Another step than thine to spy.—

'Wake, Allan-bane,' aloud she cried
To the old minstrel by her side,—
'Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
And warm thee with a noble name.
Pour forth the glory of the Græme!'
Scarce from her lip the word had rushed, 110
When deep the conscious maiden blushed;
For of his clan, in hall and bower,
Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII

The minstrel waked his harp,—three times
Arose the well-known martial chimes,
And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
'Vainly thou bidst, O noble maid,'
Clasping his withered hands, he said,
'Vainly thou bidst me wake the strain, 120
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned!
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe;
And the proud march which victors tread
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O, well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneless fathers said, 130
This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII

'But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed
The eve thy sainted mother died;

And such the sounds which, while I strove
 To wake a lay of war or love,
 Came marring all the festal mirth,
 Appalling me who gave them birth,
 And, disobedient to my call, 140
 Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
 Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
 Were exiled from their native heaven.
 O! if yet worse mishap and woe
 My master's house must undergo,
 Or aught but weal to Ellen fair
 Brood in these accents of despair,
 No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
 Triumph or rapture from thy string;
 One short, one final strain shall flow, 150
 Fraught with unutterable woe,
 Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
 Thy master cast him down and die!

IX

Soothing she answered him: 'Assuage,
 Mine honored friend, the fears of age.
 All melodies to thee are known
 That harp has rung or pipe has blown,
 In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
 From Tweed to Spey; what marvel, then,
 At times unbidden notes should rise, 160
 Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
 Entangling, as they rush along,
 The war-march with the funeral song?
 Small ground is now for boding fear;
 Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
 My sire, in native virtue great,
 Resigning lordship, lands, and state,

Not then to fortune more resigned
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
The graceful foliage storms may reave, 170
The noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me'—she stooped, and, looking round,
Plucked a blue harebell from the ground,—
'For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower that loves the lea
May well my simple emblem be.
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
That in the King's own garden grows.
And when I place it in my hair, 180
Allan, a bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair.'
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

X

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway
Wiled the old Harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw
When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied: 190
'Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
The rank, the honors thou hast lost!
O, might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
To see my favorite's step advance
The lightest in the courtly dance,
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,
And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!' 200

XI

'Fair dreams are these,' the maiden cried,—
 Light was her accent, yet she sighed,—
 'Yet is this mossy rock to me
 Worth splendid chair and canopy;
 Nor would my footstep spring more gay
 In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
 Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
 To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
 And then for suitors proud and high,
 To bend before my conquering eye,
 Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say
 That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
 The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
 The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
 Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
 A Lennox foray—for a day.'

210

XII

The ancient bard her glee repressed.
 'Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
 For who, through all this western wild,
 Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled?
 In Holy-Rood a knight he slew.
 I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
 Courtiers give place before the stride
 Of the undaunted homicide;
 And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
 Full sternly kept his mountain land.
 Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
 That I such hated truth should say!—
 The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
 Disowned by every noble peer,
 Even the rude refuge we have here?
 Alas, this wild marauding Chief
 Alone might hazard our relief.

220

230

And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear
That thou mightst guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread,
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane.'

240

XIII

'Minstrel,' the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
'My debts to Roderick's house I know.
All that a mother could bestow
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrowed o'er her sister's child.
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronnan's cell;
Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

250

260

XIV

'Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses gray,—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave; 270
And generous,—save vindictive mood
Or jealous transport chafe his blood.
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel.
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind, 280
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand that for my father fought
I honor, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red
From peasants slaughtered in their shed?
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky. 290
While yet a child,—and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid and sable plume;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air;
But if thou join'st a suitor's claim
In serious mood to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear. 300

To change such odious theme were best,—
 What think'st thou of our stranger guest?'

XV

'What think I of him?—Woe the while
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
 For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
 What time he leagued, no longer foes,
 His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
 Did, self-unscaabbarded, foreshow
 The footstep of a secret foe. 310
 If courtly spy hath harbored here,
 What may we for the Douglas fear?
 What for this island, deemed of old
 Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
 If neither spy nor foe, I pray
 What yet may jealous Roderick say?—
 Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
 Bethink thee of the discord dread
 That kindled when at Beltane game
 Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Græme; 320
 Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,
 Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud.
 Beware!—But hark! what sounds are these?
 My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
 No weeping birch nor aspens wake,
 Nor breath is dimpling in the lake;
 Still is the canna's hoary beard,
 Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
 And hark again! some pipe of war
 Sends the bold pibroch from afar.' 330

XVI

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
 Four darkening specks upon the tide,

That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steered full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they passed,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered Pine. 340
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave;
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow 350
From their loud chanter down, and sweep
The furrowed bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sounds, by distance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wailed every harsher note away; 360
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear,
Those thrilling sounds that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,

And hurrying at the signal dread,
The battered earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Expressed their merry marching on, 370
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarred;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yelled amain.
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there. 380
Nor ended thus the strain, but slow
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII

The war-pipes ceased, but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud a hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their Chieftain's praise. 390
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measured sweep the burden bore,
In such wild cadence as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allan know,
'Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!'
And near, and nearer as they rowed,
Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX

BOAT SONG.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
 Honored and blessed be the ever-green Pine! 400
 Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gayly to burgeon and broadly to grow,
 While every Highland glen
 Sends our shout back again,
 'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade; 410
 When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moored in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
 Echo his praise again,
 'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

XX

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
 And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied; 420
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
 And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.
 Widow and Saxon maid
 Long shall lament our raid,
 Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
 Lennox and Leven-glen
 Shake when they hear again,
 'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine! 430
O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepmost glen,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

XXI

With all her joyful female band
Had Lady Margaret sought the strand. 440
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
And high their snowy arms they threw,
As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;
While, prompt to please with mother's art
The darling passion of his heart,
The Dame called Ellen to the strand
To greet her kinsman ere he land.
'Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
And shun to wreath a victor's brow?' 450
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obeyed.
And, when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung.
'List, Allan-bane! From mainland cast
I hear my father's signal blast.
Be ours,' she cried, 'the skiff to guide
And waft him from the mountain-side.'
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
She darted to her shallop light, 460
And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,
For her dear form, his mother's band,

The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

XXII

Some feelings are to mortals given
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though 'twas an hero's eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she that fear—affection's proof—
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

470

480

XXIII

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dashed with hasty hand away
From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said:
'Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower's glistening eye?

490

I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answered loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon Chief may claim, 500
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
Though the waned crescent owned my might,
And in my train trooped lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,
A welcome give more kind and true 510
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,—
O, it out-beggars all I lost!

XXIV

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dewdrop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shamefaced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid 520
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favorite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.

And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail 530
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue.
Trained to the chase, his eagle eye 540
The ptarmigan in snow could spy;
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer.
Right up Ben Lomond could he press
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind 550
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;
It danced as lightsome in his breast
As played the feather on his crest.
Yet friends who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,

And bards, who saw his features bold
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown, 560
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, 'O my sire!' did Ellen say,
'Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late returned? And why'—
The rest was in her speaking eye.
'My child, the chase I follow far, 570
'Tis mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I strayed
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade;
Nor strayed I safe, for all around
Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risked life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps, not unpursued; 580
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me again.'

XXVII

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet not in action, word, or eye
Failed aught in hospitality.

In talk and sport they whiled away
 The morning of that summer day; 590
 But at high noon a courier light
 Held secret parley with the knight,
 Whose moody aspect soon declared
 That evil were the news he heard.
 Deep thought seemed toiling in his head;
 Yet was the evening banquet made
 Ere he assembled round the flame
 His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
 And Ellen too; then cast around
 His eyes, then fixed them on the ground, 600
 As studying phrase that might avail
 Best to convey unpleasant tale.
 Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
 Then raised his haughty brow, and said:—

XXVIII

'Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
 Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
 Kinsman and father,—if such name
 Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
 Mine honored mother;—Ellen,—why,
 My cousin, turn away thine eye?— 610
 And Græme, in whom I hope to know
 Full soon a noble friend or foe,
 When age shall give thee thy command,
 And leading in thy native land,—
 List all!—The King's vindictive pride
 Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
 Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
 To share their monarch's sylvan game,
 Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
 And when the banquet they prepared, 620
 And wide their loyal portals flung,
 O'er their own gateway struggling hung.

Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless and so ruthless known, 630
Now hither comes; his end the same,
The same pretext of sylvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye,
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas' green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know.
Your counsel in the streight I show.'

XXIX

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye, 640
Then turned their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty color went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme,
But from his glance it well appeared
'Twas but for Ellen that he feared;
While, sorrowful, but undismayed,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:
'Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er; 650
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For well thou know'st, at this gray head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.

For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek apart
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor
The stern pursuit be passed and o'er.'

660

XXX

'No, by mine honor,' Roderick said,
'So help me Heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My father's ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech: Grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
And when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!—
Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heat might say.
Small need of inroad or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite

670

680

Each mountain clan in friendly band
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foiled King from pathless glen
Shall bootless turn him home again.' 690

XXXI

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean tide's incessant roar,
Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around, 700
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow?
Thus Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawned around,
By crossing terrors wildly tossed, 710
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak,—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,

Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rushed the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.

720

‘Roderick, enough! enough!’ he cried.
‘My daughter cannot be thy bride;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be,—forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne’er
Will level a rebellious spear.

730

’Twas I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
I love him still, despite my wrongs
By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.
O, seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined!’

XXXIII

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode.
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seemed, by the torch’s gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions’ shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim’s way.
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,

740

750

While eyes that mocked at tears before
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

760

XXXIV

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid.
'Back, beardless boy!' he sternly said;
'Back, minion! holdst thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid
Thank thou for punishment delayed.'
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
'Perish my name if aught afford
Its Chieftain safety save his sword!'
Thus as they strove their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been—but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes

770

780

His giant strength.—‘Chieftains, forego!
 I hold the first who strikes my foe.—
 Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
 What! is the Douglas fallen so far
 His daughter’s hand is deemed the spoil
 Of such dishonorable broil?’
 Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
 As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
 And each upon his rival glared,
 With foot advanced and blade half bared.

790

XXXV

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
 Margaret on Roderick’s mantle hung,
 And Malcolm heard his Ellen’s scream,
 As faltered through terrific dream.
 Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
 And veiled his wrath in scornful word:
 ‘Rest safe till morning; pity ’twere
 Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
 Then mayst thou to James Stuart tell,
 Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
 Nor lackey with his freeborn clan
 The pageant pomp of earthly man.
 More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
 Thou canst our strength and passes show.—
 Malise, what ho!’—His henchman came.
 ‘Give our safe-conduct to the Græme.’
 Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold:
 ‘Fear nothing for thy favorite hold;
 The spot an angel deigned to grace
 Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place.
 Thy churlish courtesy for those
 Reserve who fear to be thy foes.
 As safe to me the mountain way
 At midnight as in blaze of day,

800

810

Though with his boldest at his back
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.— 820
Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
Naught here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
So secret but we meet again.—
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

XXXVI

Old Allan followed to the strand—
Such was the Douglas's command—
And anxious told how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn 830
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme
From those who to the signal came.
Far up the lake 'twere safest land;
Himself would row him to the strand.
He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,
His ample plaid in tightened fold, 840
And stripped his limbs to such array
As best might suit the watery way,

XXXVII

Then spoke abrupt: 'Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!
The Minstrel's hand he kindly pressed,—
'O, could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;

To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade. 850
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme
Who loves the chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honored Douglas dwell
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu I owed him naught,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side.’
Then plunged he in the flashing tide. 860
Bold o’er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steered him from the shore;
And Allan strained his anxious eye,
Far mid the lake his form to spy,
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave.
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell. 870
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD

THE GATHERING

I

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store
Of their strange ventures happed by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless
course.

Yet live there still who can remember well 10
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.

II

The Summer dawn's reflected hue 20
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,



Ben Lomond and Loch Lomond

And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy.
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice reared of silver bright; 30
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dewdrops, led her fawn;
The gray mist left the mountain-side,
The torrent showed its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove
Her notes of peace and rest and love. 40

III

No thought of peace, no thought of rest
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
For such Antiquity had taught 50
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,

She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

60

IV

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian the Hermit by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grizzled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look;
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er.
The hallowed creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse.
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunned with care;
The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase called off his hound;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and signed the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien.

70

80

90

V

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.
His mother watched a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scattered lay the bones of men
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fettered there the hand
Which once could burst an iron band; 100
Beneath the broad and ample bone
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The fieldfare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blindworm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet, flushed and full,
For heath-bell with her purple bloom
Supplied the bonnet and the plume. 110
All night, in this sad glen, the maid
Sat shrouded in her mantle's shade.
She said no shepherd sought her side,
No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood did Alice wear;
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short,
Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy church or blessed rite, 120
But locked her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfessed.

VI

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;

A moody and heart-broken boy,
 Estranged from sympathy and joy,
 Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
 On his mysterious lineage flung.
 Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
 To wood and stream his hap to wail, 130
 Till, frantic, he as truth received
 What of his birth the crowd believed,
 And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
 To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
 In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
 The cloister oped her pitying gate;
 In vain the learning of the age
 Unclasped the sable-lettered page;
 Even in its treasures he could find
 Food for the fever of his mind. 140
 Eager he read whatever tells
 Of magic, cabala, and spells,
 And every dark pursuit allied
 To curious and presumptuous pride;
 Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
 And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
 Desperate he sought Benharrow's den
 And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII

The desert gave him visions wild
 Such as might suit the spectre's child. 150
 Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
 He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
 Till from their foam his dazzled eyes
 Beheld the River Demon rise.
 The mountain mist took form and limb
 Of noontide hag or goblin grim;
 The midnight wind came wild and dread,
 Swelled with the voices of the dead;

Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death. 160
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast
Of charging steeds, careering fast 170
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride;
The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
All augured ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII

'Twas all prepared;—and from the rock
A goat, the patriarch of the flock, 180
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide
Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet framed with care,
A cubit's length in measure due;
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew, 190
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,

And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The Cross thus formed he held on high,
With wasted hand and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke:—

IX

'Woe to the clansman who shall view
This symbol of sepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew

200

On Alpine's dwelling low!
Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
Each clansman's execration just

Shall doom him wrath and woe.'
He paused;—the word the vassals took,
With forward step and fiery look;
On high their naked brands they shook,
Their clattering targets wildly strook;

210

And first in murmur low,
Then, like the billow in his course
That far to seaward finds his source,
And flings to shore his mustered force,
Burst with loud roar their answer hoarse,

'Woe to the traitor, woe!
Ben-an's gray scalp the accents knew,
The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle screamed afar,—
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

220

X

The shout was hushed on lake and fell;
The Monk resumed his muttered spell.

Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
And the few words that reached the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
‘Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear,

230

A kindred fate shall know.
Far o’er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine’s vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame
And infamy and woe.’

240

Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goshawk’s whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood’s babbling trill
Of curses stammered slow,
Answering with imprecation dread,
‘Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursed be the meanest shed
That e’er shall hide the houseless head

250

We doom to want and woe!’
A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the gray pass where birches wave
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his laboring breath he drew,

While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
 And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
 He meditated curse more dread, 260
 And deadlier, on the clansman's head
 Who, summoned to his chieftain's aid,
 The signal saw and disobeyed.
 The crosslet's points of sparkling wood
 He quenched among the bubbling blood,
 And, as again the sign he reared,
 Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
 'When flits this Cross from man to man,
 Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
 Burst be the ear that fails to heed! 270
 Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
 May ravens tear the careless eyes,
 Wolves make the coward heart their prize!
 As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
 So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!
 As dies in hissing gore the spark,
 Quench thou his light, Destruction dark!
 And be the grace to him denied,
 Bought by this sign to all beside!' 280
 He ceased; no echo gave again
 The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII

Then Roderick with impatient look
 From Brian's hand the symbol took.
 'Speed, Malise, speed!' he said, and gave
 The crosslet to his henchman brave.
 'The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
 Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed!'
 Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
 A barge across Loch Katrine flew;
 High stood the henchman on the prow; 290
 So rapidly the barge-men row,

The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
 Were all unbroken and afloat,
 Dancing in foam and ripple still,
 When it had neared the mainland hill;
 And from the silver beach's side
 Still was the prow three fathom wide
 When lightly bounded to the land
 The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide 300
 On fleeter foot was never tied.
 Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
 Thine active sinews never braced.
 Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
 Burst down like torrent from its crest;
 With short and springing footstep pass
 The trembling bog and false morass;
 Across the brook like roebuck bound,
 And thread the brake like questing hound;
 The crag is high, the scaur is deep, 310
 Yet shrink not from the desperate leap.
 Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
 Yet by the fountain pause not now;
 Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
 Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
 The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
 Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
 Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
 With rivals in the mountain race;
 But danger, death, and warrior deed 320
 Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed!

XIV

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
 In arms the huts and hamlets rise;

From winding glen, from upland brown,
 They poured each hardy tenant down.
 Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
 He showed the sign, he named the place,
 And, pressing forward like the wind,
 Left clamor and surprise behind.

The fisherman forsook the strand,
 The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
 With changed cheer, the mower blithe
 Left in the half-cut swath his scythe;
 The herds without a keeper strayed,
 The plough was in mid-furrow stayed,
 The falconer tossed his hawk away,
 The hunter left the stag at bay.

330

Prompt at the signal of alarms,
 Each son of Alpine rushed to arms.

So swept the tumult and affray

340

Along the margin of Achray.

Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er

Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!

The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep

So stilly on thy bosom deep,

The lark's blithe carol from the cloud

Seems for the scene too gayly loud.

xv

Speed, Malise, speed! The lake is past;

Duncraggan's huts appear at last,

And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,

350

Half hidden in the copse so green.

There mayst thou rest, thy labor done;

Their lord shall speed the signal on.—

As stoops the hawk upon his prey,

The henchman shot him down the way.

What woful accents load the gale?

The funeral yell, the female wail!

A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
Who, in the battle or the chase,
At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
Within the hall, where torch's ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
His stripling son stands mournful by,
His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
The village maids and matrons round
The dismal coronach resound.

360

XVI

CORONACH

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

370

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

380

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!

Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever! 390

XVII

See Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed.
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread, 400
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste or deadly fear
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast.—Unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man's bier he stood,
Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood.—
'The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!'

XVIII

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu.
'Alas!' she sobbed,—'and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!' 410

how far do they carry it?

One look he cast upon the bier,
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep to clear his laboring breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she marked the henchman's eye 430
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
'Kinsman,' she said, 'his race is run
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen,—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.—
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head! 440
Let babes and women wail the dead.'
Then weapon-clang and martial call
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe with hurried hand;
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force; 450
Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

XIX

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire;
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.

O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
 Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew;
 The tear that gathered in his eye
 He left the mountain-breeze to dry;
 Until, where Teith's young waters roll
 Betwixt him and a wooded knoll
 That graced the sable strath with green, 460
 The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
 Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
 But Angus paused not on the edge;
 Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
 Though reeled his sympathetic eye,
 He dashed amid the torrent's roar.
 His right hand high the crosslet bore,
 His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
 And stay his footing in the tide.
 He stumbled twice,—the foam splashed high, 470
 With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
 And had he fallen,—forever there,
 Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
 But still, as if in parting life,
 Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife,
 Until the opposing bank he gained,
 And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX

A blithesome rout that morning-tide
 Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
 Her troth Tombea's Mary gave 480
 To Norman, heir of Armandave,
 And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
 The bridal now resumed their march.
 In rude but glad procession came
 Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
 And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
 Which snooded maiden would not hear;

And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
490 Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step and bashful hand
She held the kerchief's snowy band.
The gallant bridegroom by her side
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI

Who meets them at the churchyard gate? 500
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soiled he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
'The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!
And must he change so soon the hand 510
Just linked to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
Her summons dread brook no delay;
Stretch to the race,—away! away! 520

XXII

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
 And lingering eyed his lovely bride,
 Until he saw the starting tear
 Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
 Then, trusting not a second look,
 In haste he sped him up the brook,
 Nor backward glanced till on the heath
 Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.—
 What in the racer's bosom stirred?
 The sickening pang of hope deferred, 530
 And memory with a torturing train
 Of all his morning visions vain.
 Mingled with love's impatience, came
 The manly thirst for martial fame;
 The stormy joy of mountaineers
 Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
 And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
 And hope, from well-fought field returning,
 With war's red honors on his crest,
 To clasp his Mary to his breast. 540
 Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
 Like fire from flint he glanced away,
 While high resolve and feeling strong
 Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII

SONG

The heath this night must be my bed,
 The bracken curtain for my head,
 My lullaby the warder's tread,
 Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
 To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
 My couch may be my bloody plaid,
 My vesper song thy wail, sweet maid! 550
 It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow;
I dare not think upon thy vow,
 And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
 His foot like arrow free, Mary.

560

A time will come with feeling fraught;
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
 Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if returned from conquered foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
 To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze,
Rushing in conflagration strong
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths thy voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turned its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,

570

580

From the gray sire, whose trembling hand
 Could hardly buckle on his brand,
 To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
 Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
 Each valley, each sequestered glen,
 Mustered its little horde of men, 590
 That met as torrents from the height
 In Highland dales their streams unite,
 Still gathering, as they pour along,
 A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
 Till at the rendezvous they stood
 By hundreds prompt for blows and blood,
 Each trained to arms since life began,
 Owning no tie but to his clan,
 No oath but by his chieftain's hand,
 No law but Roderick Dhu's command. 600

XXV

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
 Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,
 And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath
 To view the frontiers of Menteith.
 All backward came with news of truce.
 Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
 In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
 No banner waved on Cardross gate,
 On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
 Nor scared the herons from Loch Con; 610
 All seemed at peace.—Now wot ye why
 The Chieftain with such anxious eye,
 Ere to the muster he repair,
 This western frontier scanned with care?
 In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
 A fair though cruel pledge was left;
 For Douglas, to his promise true,
 That morning from the isle withdrew,

And in a deep sequestered dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard in Celtic tongue
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin Cave.

620

XXVI

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
Hurled by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's gray summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged sylvan grot.
The oak and birch with mingled shade
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.
Suspended cliffs with hideous sway
Seemed nodding o'er the cavern gray.
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.

630

640

650

Gray Superstition's whisper dread
 Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
 For there, she said, did fays resort,
 And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
 By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
 And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII

Now eve, with western shadows long,
 Floated on Katrine bright and strong, 660
 When Roderick with a chosen few
 Repassed the heights of Benvenue.
 Above the Goblin Cave they go,
 Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;
 The prompt retainers speed before,
 To launch the shallop from the shore,
 For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
 To view the passes of Achray,
 And place his clansmen in array.
 Yet lags the Chief in musing mind, 670
 Unwonted sight, his men behind.
 A single page, to bear his sword,
 Alone attended on his lord;
 The rest their way through thickets break,
 And soon await him by the lake.
 It was a fair and gallant sight,
 To view them from the neighboring height,
 By the low-levelled sunbeam's light!
 For strength and stature, from the clan
 Each warrior was a chosen man, 680
 As even afar might well be seen,
 By their proud step and martial mien.
 Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
 Their targets gleam, as by the boat
 A wild and warlike group they stand,
 That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII

Their Chief with step reluctant still
 Was lingering on the craggy hill,
 Hard by where turned apart the road
 To Douglas's obscure abode.
 It was but with that dawning morn
 That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
 To drown his love in war's wild roar,
 Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
 But he who stems a stream with sand,
 And fetters flame with flaxen band,
 Has yet a harder task to prove,—
 By firm resolve to conquer love!
 Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
 Still hovering near his treasure lost;
 For though his haughty heart deny
 A parting meeting to his eye,
 Still fondly strains his anxious ear
 The accents of her voice to hear,
 And inly did he curse the breeze
 That waked to sound the rustling trees.
 But hark! what mingles in the strain?
 It is the harp of Allan-bane,
 That wakes its measure slow and high,
 Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
 What melting voice attends the strings?
 'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings.

690

700

710

XXIX

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

Ave Maria! maiden mild!
 Listen to a maiden's prayer!
 Thou canst hear though from the wild,
 Thou canst save amid despair.

Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
 Though banished, outcast, and reviled—
 Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
 Mother, hear a suppliant child!

720

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share
 Shall seem with down of eider piled,
 If thy protection hover there.
 The murky cavern's heavy air
 Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
 Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,
 Mother, list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
 From this their wonted haunt exiled,
 Shall flee before thy presence fair.
 We bow us to our lot of care,
 Beneath thy guidance reconciled.
 Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
 And for a father hear a child!

730

Ave Maria!

XXX

Died on the harp the closing hymn.
 Unmoved in attitude and limb,
 As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
 Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
 Until the page with humble sign
 Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
 Then while his plaid he round him cast,
 'Tis the last time—'tis the last,'

740

He muttered thrice,—‘the last time e’er
That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!’
It was a goading thought,—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
An instant ’cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,
And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where mustered in the vale below
Clan-Alpine’s men in martial show.

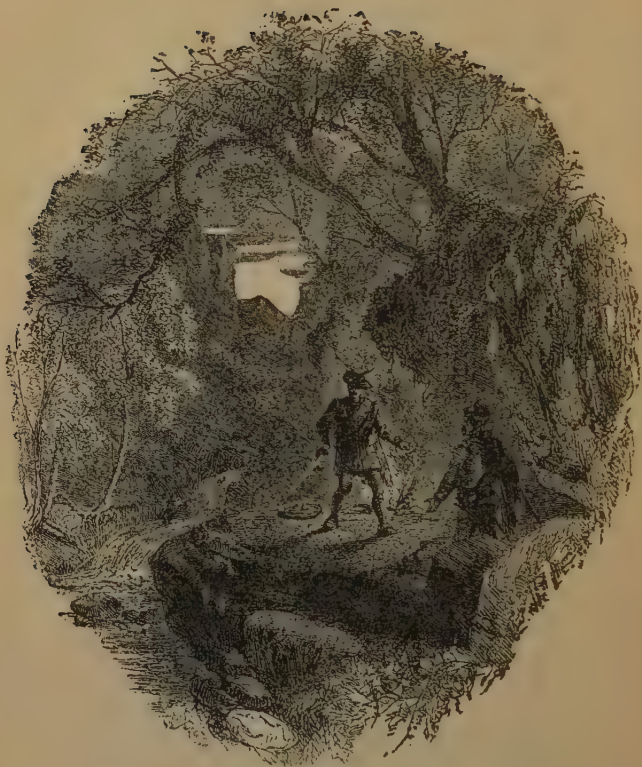
750

XXXI

A various scene the clansmen made:
Some sat, some stood, some slowly strayed;
But most, with mantles folded round,
Were couched to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was matched the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade
Or lance’s point a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain’s eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain’s steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell;
It died upon Bochastle’s plain,
And Silence claimed her evening reign.

760

770



Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu

CANTO FOURTH

THE PROPHECY

I

'THE rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years!
Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung, 10
Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood
A wakeful sentinel he stood.
Hark!—on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
'Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
Art thou returned from Braes of Doune. 20
By thy keen step and glance I know
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe.'—
For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone.—

‘Where sleeps the Chief?’ the henchman said.
‘Apart, in yonder misty glade;
To his lone couch I’ll be your guide.’—
Then called a slumberer by his side,
And stirred him with his slackened bow,—
‘Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the track
Keep eagle watch till I come back.’

30

III

Together up the pass they sped.
‘What of the foeman?’ Norman said.—
‘Varying reports from near and far;
This certain,—that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command to march from Doune;
King James the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior’s plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A shelter for thy bonny bride?’—
‘What! know ye not that Roderick’s care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms; and given his charge
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?’—

40

50

IV

‘Tis well advised,—the Chieftain’s plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.

But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?
'It is because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm called; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew.'—

60

MALISE

'Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
The choicest of the prey we had
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glowed like fiery spark;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kerns in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row
A child might scathless stroke his brow.'

70

V

NORMAN

'That bull was slain; his reeking hide
They stretched the cataract beside,
Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.
Couched on a shelf beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,

80

Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
 And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
 Midst groan of rock and roar of stream,
 The wizard waits prophetic dream.
 Nor distant rests the Chief;—but hush!
 See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
 The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
 To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
 Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
 That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
 Or raven on the blasted oak,
 That, watching while the deer is broke,
 His morsel claims with sullen croak?

90

MALISE

'Peace! peace! to other than to me
 Thy words were evil augury;
 But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
 Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
 Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,
 Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell.
 The Chieftain joins him, see—and now
 Together they descend the brow.'

100

VI

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
 The Hermit Monk held solemn word:—
 'Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
 For man endowed with mortal life,
 Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
 Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
 Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
 Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—
 'Tis hard for such to view unfurled
 The curtain of the future world.
 Yet, witness every quaking limb,
 My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,

110

My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
This for my Chieftain have I borne!
The shapes that sought my fearful couch
A human tongue may ne'er avouch;
No mortal man—save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law—
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fateful answer came
In characters of living flame!
Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
But borne and branded on my soul:—
WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.'

VII

'Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood
But first our broadswords tasted blood.
A surer victim still I know,
Self-offered to the auspicious blow:
A spy has sought my land this morn,—
No eve shall witness his return!
My followers guard each pass's mouth,
To east, to westward, and to south;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till in deep path or dingle brown
He light on those shall bring him down.—
But see, who comes his news to show!
Malise! what tidings of the foe?'

VIII

'At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive
Two Barons proud their banners wave.

I saw the Moray's silver star,
 And marked the sable pale of Mar.'
 'By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
 I love to hear of worthy foes.
 When move they on?' 'To-morrow's noon
 Will see them here for battle boune.'
 'Then shall it see a meeting stern!
 But, for the place,—say, couldst thou learn
 Nought of the friendly clans of Earn? 160
 Strengthened by them, we well might bide
 The battle on Benledi's side.
 Thou couldst not?—Well! Clan-Alpine's men
 Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
 Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
 All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
 Each for his hearth and household fire,
 Father for child, and son for sire,
 Lover for maid beloved!—But why—
 Is it the breeze affects mine eye? 170
 Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
 A messenger of doubt or fear?
 No!—sooner may the Saxon lance
 Unfix Benledi from his stance
 Than doubt or terror can pierce through
 The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!
 'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.
 Each to his post!—all know their charge.'
 The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
 The broadswords gleam, the banners dance, 180
 Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.—
 I turn me from the martial roar,
 And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX

Where is the Douglas?—He is gone;
 And Ellen sits on the gray stone

Fast by the cave, and makes her moan,
 While vainly Allan's words of cheer
 Are poured on her unheeding ear.
 'He will return—dear lady, trust!—
 With joy return;—he will—he must.
 Well was it time to seek afar
 Some refuge from impending war,
 When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
 Are cowed by the approaching storm.
 I saw their boats with many a light,
 Floating the livelong yesternight,
 Shifting like flashes darted forth
 By the red streamers of the north;
 I marked at morn how close they ride,
 Thick moored by the lone islet's side,
 Like wild ducks couching in the fen
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
 Since this rude race dare not abide
 The peril on the mainland side,
 Shall not thy noble father's care
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare?'

190

200

X

ELLEN

'No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,
 Douglas a parting blessing gave,
 The tear that glistened in his eye
 Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
 My soul, though feminine and weak,
 Can image his; e'en as the lake,
 Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
 Reflects the invulnerable rock.
 He hears report of battle rife,
 He deems himself the cause of strife.

210

I saw him redden when the theme
 Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream 220
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
 Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
 Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught?
 O no! 'twas apprehensive thought
 For the kind youth,—for Roderick too—
 Let me be just—that friend so true;
 In danger both, and in our cause!
 Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
 Why else that solemn warning given,
 'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!' 230
 Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
 If eve return him not again,
 Am I to hie and make me known?
 Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
 Buys his friends' safety with his own;
 He goes to do—what I had done,
 Had Douglas' daughter been his son!

XI

'Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
 If aught should his return delay,
 He only named yon holy fane 240
 As fitting place to meet again.
 Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,—
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!—
 My visioned sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.
 When did my gifted dream beguile?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow
 That presaged this approaching woe!
 Sooth was my prophecy of fear; 250
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.

Would we had left this dismal spot!
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
 Of such a wondrous tale I know.—
 Dear lady, change that look of woe;
 My harp was wont thy grief to cheer.’

ELLEN

‘Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
 But cannot stop the bursting tear.’
 The Minstrel tried his simple art,
 But distant far was Ellen’s heart.

260

XII

Tell story of Alice Brand
BALLAD
 ALICE BRAND

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
 When the mavis and merle are singing,
 When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
 And the hunter’s horn is ringing.

‘O Alice Brand, my native land
 Is lost for love of you;
 And we must hold by wood and wold,
 As outlaws wont to do.

‘O Alice, ’twas all for thy locks so bright,
 And ’twas all for thine eyes so blue,
 That on the night of our luckless flight
 Thy brother bold I slew.

270

‘Now must I teach to hew the beech
 The hand that held the glaive,
 For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
 And stakes to fence our cave.

'And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,
To keep the cold away.'

280

'O Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

'If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest-green.

'And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.'

290

XIII

BALLAD CONTINUED

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood;
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who woned within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

300

'Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,

Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green?

'Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie
For thou wert christened man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban.

310

'Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die.'

XIV

BALLAD CONTINUED

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
Though the birds have stilled their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands,
And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
'I fear not sign,' quoth the grisly elf,
'That is made with bloody hands.'

320

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear,—
'And if there's blood upon his hand,
'Tis but the blood of deer.'

'Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand.'

330

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
 And made the holy sign,—
 ‘And if there’s blood on Richard’s hand,
 A spotless hand is mine.

‘And I conjure thee, demon elf,
 By Him whom demons fear,
 To show us whence thou art thyself,
 And what thine errand here?’

XV

BALLAD CONTINUED

“Tis merry, ’tis merry, in Fairy-land, 340
 When fairy birds are singing,
 When the court doth ride by their monarch’s side,
 With bit and bridle ringing;

‘And gayly shines the Fairy-land—
 But all is glistening show,
 Like the idle gleam that December’s beam
 Can dart on ice and snow.

‘And fading, like that varied gleam,
 Is our inconstant shape,
 Who now like knight and lady seem, 350
 And now like dwarf and ape.

‘It was between the night and day,
 When the Fairy King has power,
 That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
 And ’twixt life and death was snatched away
 To the joyless Elfin bower.

‘But wist I of a woman bold,
 Who thrice my brow durst sign,
 I might regain my mortal mould,
 As fair a form as thine.’

She crossed him once—she crossed him twice—
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing, 370
But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI

Just as the minstrel sounds were stayed,
A stranger climbed the steepy glade;
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
'Tis Snowdoun's Knight, 'tis James Fitz-James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then, starting, scarce suppressed a scream. 380
'O stranger! in such hour of fear
What evil hap has brought thee here?'
'An evil hap how can it be
That bids me look again on thee?
By promise bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning-tide,
And marshalled over bank and bourne
The happy path of my return.'
'The happy path!—what! said he naught
Of war, of battle to be fought, 390
Of guarded pass?' 'No, by my faith!
Nor saw I aught could augur scathe.'

'O haste thee, Allan, to the kern;
 Yonder his tartans I discern.
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
 That he will guide the stranger sure!—
 What prompted thee, unhappy man?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed, by love or fear,
 Unknown to him to guide thee here.'

400

XVII

'Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath
 When love or honor's weighed with death.
 Then let me profit by my chance,
 And speak my purpose bold at once.
 I come to bear thee from a wild
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled,
 By this soft hand to lead thee far
 From frantic scenes of feud and war.
 Near Bochastle my horses wait;
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower—'
 'O hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art
 To say I do not read thy heart;
 Too much, before, my selfish ear
 Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
 That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
 In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track;
 And how, O how, can I atone
 The wreck my vanity brought on!—
 One way remains—I'll tell him all—
 Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
 Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
 Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!

410

420

But first—my father is a man
Outlawed and exiled, under ban.
The price of blood is on his head;
With me 'twere infamy to wed. 430
Still wouldst thou speak?—then hear the truth!
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth—
If yet he is!—exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity—
Thou hast the secret of my heart;
Forgive, be generous, and depart!

XVIII

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,
But here he knew and felt them vain.
There shot no glance from Ellen's eye 440
To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopeless agony
As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffered to attend her side 450
As brother would a sister guide.
'O little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn
If thou mayst trust yon wily kern.'
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made;
Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
He paused, and turned, and came again. 460

XIX

'Hear, lady, yet a parting word!—
 It chanced in fight that my poor sword
 Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
 This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
 And bade, when I had boon to crave,
 To bring it back, and boldly claim
 The recompense that I would name.
 Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
 But one who lives by lance and sword,
 Whose castle is his helm and shield, 470
 His lordship the embattled field.
 What from a prince can I demand,
 Who neither reck of state nor land?
 Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
 Each guard and usher knows the sign.
 Seek thou the King without delay;
 This signet shall secure thy way;
 And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
 As ransom of his pledge to me.'
 He placed the golden circlet on, 480
 Paused—kissed her hand—and then was gone.
 The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
 So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
 He joined his guide, and wending down
 The ridges of the mountain brown,
 Across the stream they took their way
 That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX

All in the Trosachs' glen was still;
 Noontide was sleeping on the hill.
 Sudden his guide whooped loud and high.— 490
 'Murdoch! was that a signal cry?'—
 He stammered forth, 'I shout to scare
 Yon raven from his dainty fare.'

He looked—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed. 'Ah! gallant gray!
For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well
We ne'er had seen the 'Trosachs' dell.—
Murdoch, move first—but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

500

XXI

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,
When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tattered weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seemed naught to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
Where scarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shrieked till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laughed when near they drew,
For then the Lowland garb she knew;
And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she sung—
She sung!—the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
And now, though strained and roughened, still
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

510

520

XXII

SONG

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
 They say my brain is warped and wrung.—
 I cannot sleep on Highland brae,

I cannot pray in Highland tongue. 530
 But were I now where Allan glides,
 Or heard my native Devan's tides,
 So sweetly would I rest, and pray
 That Heaven would close my wintry day!

'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
 They made me to the church repair;
 It was my bridal morn, they said,
 And my true love would meet me there.
 But woe betide the cruel guile
 That drowned in blood the morning smile!
 And woe betide the fairy dream! 540
 I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII

'Who is this maid? what means her lay?
 She hovers o'er the hollow way,
 And flutters wide her mantle gray,
 As the lone heron spreads his wing,
 By twilight, o'er a haunted spring.'
 'Tis Blanche of Devan,' Murdoch said,
 'A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
 Ta'en on the morn she was a bride, 550
 When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
 The gay bridegroom resistance made,
 And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
 I marvel she is now at large,
 But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.—

Hence, brain-sick fool!'—He raised his bow.—
'Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitched a bar!
'Thanks, champion, thanks!' the Maniac cried, 560
And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
'See the gray pennons I prepare,
To seek my true love through the air!
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!
No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid-air stayed,
Wave forth a banner fair and free, 570
Meet signal for their revelry.'

XXIV

'Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!
'O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

'For O my sweet William was forester true;
He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue, 580
And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!

'It was not that I meant to tell. . .
But thou art wise and guessest well.'
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman fearfully
She fixed her apprehensive eye,

Then turned it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV

'The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set,— 590
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

'It was a stag, a stag of ten,
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,—
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

'It was there he met with a wounded doe;
She was bleeding deathfully.
She warned him of the toils below, 600
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

'He had an eye, and he could heed,—
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed,—
Hunters watch so narrowly.'

XXVI

Fitz-James's mind was passion-tossed,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.
Not like a stag that spies the snare, 610
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high.
'Disclose thy treachery, or die!'
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.

The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast.—
Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need;
With heart of fire, and foot of wind, 620
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life.
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couched upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach!—It may not be—
Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see;
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!—
Resistless speeds the deadly thrust
As lightning strikes the pine to dust; 630
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fallen with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die,
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII

She sat beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed;
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray, 640
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried;—
'Stranger, it is in vain!' she cried.
'This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.

A helpless injured wretch I die,
 And something tells me in thine eye 650
 That thou wert mine avenger born.
 Seest thou this tress?—O, still I've worn
 This little tress of yellow hair
 Through danger, frenzy, and despair! .
 It once was bright and clear as thine,
 But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.
 I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
 Nor from what guiltless victim's head,—
 My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
 Like plumage on thy helmet brave, 660
 Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
 And thou wilt bring it me again.
 I waver still.—O God! more bright
 Let reason beam her parting light!—
 O, by thy knighthood's honored sign,
 And for thy life preserved by mine,
 When thou shalt see a darksome man
 Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
 With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom, 670
 Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
 And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!—
 They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
 Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell.'

XXVIII

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
 Fast poured his eyes at pity's claims;
 And now, with mingled grief and ire,
 He saw the murdered maid expire.
 'God, in my need, be my relief
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!' 680
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair;

The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side.
'By Him whose word is truth, I swear
No other favor will I wear
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!—
But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
The chase is up,—but they shall know
The stag at bay's a dangerous foe.' 690
Barred from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turned back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couched him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er.
'Of all my rash adventures past, 700
This frantic feat must prove the last:
Who e'er so mad but might have guessed
That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?—
Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
Hark, to the whistle and the shout!—
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe.
I'll couch me here till evening gray, 710
Then darkling try my dangerous way.

XXIX

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell;

Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step and ear awake, 720
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
And not the summer solstice there
Tempered the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journeyed on,
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
A watch-fire close before him burned. 730

XXX

Beside its embers red and clear,
Basked in his plaid a mountaineer;
And up he sprung with sword in hand,—
'Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!'
'A stranger.' 'What dost thou require?'
'Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost.'
'Art thou a friend to Roderick?' 'No.'
'Thou dar'st not call thyself a foe?' 740
'I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand.'
'Bold words!—but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip or bow we bend,
Who ever recked where, how, or when
The prowling fox was trapped or slain?

Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they lie
Who say thou cam'st a secret spy!—
‘They do, by heaven!—Come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest.’
‘If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight.’
‘Then by these tokens mayst thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe.’
‘Enough, enough; sit down and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare.’

750

760

XXXI .

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The hardened flesh of mountain deer;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his further speech addressed:—
‘Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true;
Each word against his honor spoke
Demands of me avenging stroke;
Yet more,—upon thy fate, 'tis said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn,—
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand.
But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
Will I depart from honor's laws;
To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.

770

780

Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword.'
'I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given!' 790
'Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby.'
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down 'like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.



Stirling Castle

CANTO FIFTH

THE COMBAT

I

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light

When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,

And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain-side,—

Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,

Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of War.

II

That early beam, so fair and sheen, 10
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way, 20
By thicket green and mountain gray,
A wildering path!—They winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
'Twas oft so steep the foot was fain 30
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on, 40
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;

A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still, 50
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange cause
He sought these wilds, traversed by few, 60
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV

'Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell,' the Saxon said,
'I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar, 70
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep perchance the villain lied.'
'Yet why a second venture try?'
'A warrior thou, and ask me why!—

Moves our free course by such fixed cause
 As gives the poor mechanic laws?
 Enough, I sought to drive away
 The lazy hours of peaceful day;
 Slight cause will then suffice to guide
 A Knight's free footsteps far and wide,—
 A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
 The merry glance of mountain maid;
 Or, if a path be dangerous known,
 The danger's self is lure alone.'

80

v

'Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
 Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
 Say, heard ye naught of Lowland war
 Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?'
 'No, by my word;—of bands prepared
 To guard King James's sports I heard;
 Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
 This muster of the mountaineer,
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,
 Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.'
 'Free be they flung! for we were loath
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.
 Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
 Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
 But, stranger, peaceful since you came,
 Bewildered in the mountain-game,
 Whence the bold boast by which you show
 Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?'
 'Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
 Naught of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Save as an outlawed desperate man,
 The chief of a rebellious clan,
 Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
 With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;

90

100

Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart.'

110

VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl.
A space he paused, then sternly said,
'And heardst thou why he drew his blade?
Heardst thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What recked the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven.'
'Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
While Albany with feeble hand
Held borrowed truncheon of command,
The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain
His herds and harvest reared in vain,—
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne.'

120

130

VII

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile:
'Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,

Deep waving fields and pastures green, 140
 With gentle slopes and groves between.
 These fertile plains, that softened vale,
 Were once the birthright of the Gael;
 The stranger came with iron hand,
 And from our fathers reft the land.
 Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
 Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
 Ask we this savage hill we tread
 For fattened steer or household bread,
 Ask we for flocks these shingles dry, 150
 And well the mountain might reply,—
 "To you, as to your sires of yore,
 Belong the target and claymore!
 I give you shelter in my breast,
 Your own good blades must win the rest."
 Pent in this fortress of the North,
 Think'st thou we will not sally forth
 To spoil the spoiler as we may,
 And from the robber rend the prey?
 Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain 160
 The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
 While of ten thousand herds there strays
 But one along yon river's maze,
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,
 Shall with strong hand redeem his share.
 Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
 That plundering Lowland field and fold
 Is aught but retribution true?
 Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.'

VIII

Answered Fitz-James: 'And, if I sought, 170
 Think'st thou no other could be brought?
 What deem ye of my path waylaid?
 My life given o'er to ambuscade?'

'As of a meed to rashness due.
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury.'
'Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride.
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come again,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain in lady's bower
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!'

180

190

IX

'Have then thy wish!' He whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,

200

And every tuft of broom gives life
 To plaided warrior armed for strife.
 That whistle garrisoned the glen 210
 At once with full five hundred men,
 As if the yawning hill to heaven
 A subterranean host had given.
 Watching their leader's beck and will,
 All silent there they stood and still.
 Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
 Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
 As if an infant's touch could urge
 Their headlong passage down the verge,
 With step and weapon forward flung, 220
 Upon the mountain-side they hung.
 The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
 Along Benledi's living side,
 Then fixed his eye and sable brow
 Full on Fitz-James. 'How say'st thou now?
 These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
 And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!'

X

Fitz-James was brave;—though to his heart
 The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
 He manned himself with dauntless air, 230
 Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
 His back against a rock he bore,
 And firmly placed his foot before.—
 'Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
 From its firm base as soon as I.'
 Sir Roderick marked,—and in his eyes
 Respect was mingled with surprise,
 And the stern joy which warriors feel
 In foeman worthy of their steel.
 Short space he stood—then waved his hand. 240
 Down sunk the disappearing band;

Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low.
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in air
Pennon and plaid and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hillside, 250
Where heath and fern were waving wide;
The sun's last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
And next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green and cold gray stone.

XI

Fitz-James looked round,—yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed, 260
And to his look the Chief replied:
'Fear naught—nay, that I need not say—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest;—I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford;
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on;—I only meant 270
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.'
They moved.—I said Fitz-James was brave
As ever knight that belted glaive,

Yet dare not say that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet by fearful proof was rife 280
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonored and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanished guardians of the ground,
And still from copse and heather deep
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind 290
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines 300
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain stayed,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:
'Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.

This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
 This head of a rebellious clan,
 Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
 Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
 Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
 A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
 See, here all vantageless I stand,
 Armed like thyself with single brand;
 For this is Coilantogle ford,
 And thou must keep thee with thy sword.'

310

XIII

The Saxon paused. 'I ne'er delayed,
 When foeman bade me draw my blade;
 Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;
 Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
 And my deep debt for life preserved,
 A better meed have well deserved.
 Can naught but blood our feud atone?
 Are there no means?'—'No, stranger, none!
 And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
 The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
 For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
 Between the living and the dead:
 "Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
 His party conquers in the strife."'
 'Then, by my word,' the Saxon said,
 'The riddle is already read.
 Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
 There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
 Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;
 Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
 To James at Stirling let us go,
 When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
 Or if the King shall not agree

320

330

340

To grant thee grace and favor free,
I plight mine honor, oath, and word
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand
That aids thee now to guard thy land.'

XIV

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye.

'Soars thy presumption, then, so high,

Because a wretched kern ye slew,

Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?

350

He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!

Thou add'st but fuel to my hate;—

My clansman's blood demands revenge.

Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change

My thought, and hold thy valor light

As that of some vain carpet knight,

Who ill deserved my courteous care,

And whose best boast is but to wear

A braid of his fair lady's hair.'

'I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!

360

It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;

For I have sworn this braid to stain

In the best blood that warms thy vein.

Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone!—

Yet think not that by thee alone,

Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;

Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,

Start at my whistle clansmen stern,

Of this small horn one feeble blast

Would fearful odds against thee cast.

370

But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—

We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.'

Then each at once his falchion drew,

Each on the ground his scabbard threw,

Each looked to sun and stream and plain
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot and point and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu
That on the field his targe he threw, 380
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dashed aside;
For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood; 390
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And showered his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock or castle-roof
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand, 400
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI

'Now yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!'
'Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die.'

Like adder darting from his coil,
 Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
 Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
 Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung; 410
 Received, but recked not of a wound,
 And locked his arms his foeman round.—
 Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
 No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
 That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
 Through bars of brass and triple steel!
 They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
 The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
 The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
 His knee was planted on his breast; 420
 His clotted locks he backward threw,
 Across his brow his hand he drew,
 From blood and mist to clear his sight,
 Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!
 But hate and fury ill supplied
 The stream of life's exhausted tide,
 And all too late the advantage came,
 To turn the odds of deadly game;
 For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
 Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye. 430
 Down came the blow! but in the heath
 The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
 The struggling foe may now unclasp
 The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
 Unwounded from the dreadful close,
 But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
 Redeemed, unhopèd, from desperate strife;
 Next on his foe his look he cast,
 Whose every gasp appeared his last; 440

In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid,—
 'Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;
 Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
 The praise that faith and valor give.'
 With that he blew a bugle note,
 Undid the collar from his throat,
 Unbonneted, and by the wave
 Sat down his brow and hands to lave.
 Then faint afar are heard the feet
 Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet; 450
 The sounds increase, and now are seen
 Four mounted squires in Lincoln green,
 Two who bear lance, and two who lead
 By loosened rein a saddled steed.
 Each onward held his headlong course,
 And by Fitz-James reined up his horse,—
 With wonder viewed the bloody spot.—
 'Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—
 You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
 And bind the wounds of yonder knight; 460
 Let the gray palfrey bear his weight
 We destined for a fairer freight,
 And bring him on to Stirling straight;
 I will before at better speed,
 To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
 The sun rides high;—I must be bouned
 To see the archer-game at noon;
 But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
 De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII

'Stand, Bayard, stand!'—The steed obeyed, 470
 With arching neck and bended head,
 And glancing eye and quivering ear,
 As if he loved his lord to hear.
 No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,
 No grasp upon the saddle laid,

But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his armed heel,
And stirred his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air, 480
The rider sat erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They dashed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew.
Still at the gallop pricked the Knight;
His merrymen followed as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past, 490
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground, 500
With splash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career looked down.

XIX

As up the flinty path they strained,
Sudden his steed the leader reined;
A signal to his squire he fung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung.—

'Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray, 510
 Who townward holds the rocky way,
 Of stature tall and poor array?
 Mark'st thou the firm yet active stride
 With which he scales the mountain-side?
 Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?'
 'No, by my word;—a burly groom
 He seems, who in the field or chase
 A baron's train would nobly grace—'
 'Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
 And jealousy, no sharper eye? 520
 Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
 That stately form and step I knew;
 Like form in Scotland is not seen,
 Treads not such step on Scottish green.
 'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
 The uncle of the banished Earl.
 Away, away, to court, to show
 The near approach of dreaded foe.
 The King must stand upon his guard;
 Douglas and he must meet prepared.' 530
 Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
 They won the Castle's postern gate.

XX

The Douglas, who had bent his way
 From Cambus-kenneth's abbey gray,
 Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf;
 Held sad communion with himself:—
 'Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
 A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
 And fiery Roderick soon will feel
 The vengeance of the royal steel. 540
 I, only I, can ward their fate,—
 God grant the ransom come not late!

The Abbess hath her promise given
 My child shall be the bride of Heaven;—
 Be pardoned one repining tear!
 For He who gave her knows how dear,
 How excellent!—But that is by,
 And now my business is—to die.—
 Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
 A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
 And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
 That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
 As on the noblest of the land
 Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
 The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
 Prepare,—for Douglas seeks his doom!
 But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
 Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
 And see! upon the crowded street,
 In motley groups what masquers meet!
 Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
 And merry morrice-dancers come.
 I guess, by all this quaint array,
 The burghers hold their sports to-day.
 James will be there; he loves such show,
 Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
 And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
 As well as where, in proud career,
 The high-born tilter shivers spear.
 I'll follow to the Castle-park,
 And play my prize;—King James shall mark
 If age has tamed these sinews stark,
 Whose force so oft in happier days
 His boyish wonder loved to praise.'

550

560

570

XXI

The Castle gates were open flung,
 The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,

And echoed loud the flinty street
 Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
 As slowly down the steep descent
 Fair Scotland's King and nobles went, 580
 While all along the crowded way
 Was jubilee and loud huzza.
 And ever James was bending low
 To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
 Doffing his cap to city dame,
 Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame.
 And well the simperer might be vain,—
 He chose the fairest of the train.
 Gravely he greets each city sire,
 Commends each pageant's quaint attire, 590
 Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
 And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
 Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,—
 'Long live the Commons' King, King James!'
 Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
 And noble dame and damsel bright,
 Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
 Of the steep street and crowded way.
 But in the train you might discern
 Dark lowering brow and visage stern; 600
 There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
 And the mean burgher's joys disdained;
 And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
 Were each from home a banished man,
 There thought upon their own gray tower,
 Their waving woods, their feudal power,
 And deemed themselves a shameful part
 Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
 Their checkered bands the joyous rout. 610

There morricers, with bell at heel
 And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
 But chief, beside the butts, there stand
 Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
 Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
 Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
 Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
 Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John.
 Their bugles challenge all that will,
 In archery to prove their skill.
 The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
 His first shaft centred in the white,
 And when in turn he shot again,
 His second split the first in twain.
 From the King's hand must Douglas take
 A silver dart, the archers' stake;
 Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
 Some answering glance of sympathy,—
 No kind emotion made reply!
 Indifferent as to archer wight,
 The monarch gave the arrow bright.

620

630

XXIII

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
 The manly wrestlers take their stand.
 Two o'er the rest superior rose,
 And proud demanded mightier foes,—
 Nor called in vain, for Douglas came.—
 For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
 Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
 Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
 Prize of the wrestling match, the King
 To Douglas gave a golden ring,
 While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
 As frozen drop of wintry dew.

640

Douglas would speak, but in his breast
 His struggling soul his words suppressed;
 Indignant then he turned him where
 Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
 To hurl the massive bar in air.
 When each his utmost strength had shown,
 The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
 From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
 And sent the fragment through the sky
 A rood beyond the farthest mark;
 And still in Stirling's royal park,
 The gray-haired sires, who know the past,
 To strangers point the Douglas cast,
 And moralize on the decay
 Of Scottish strength in modern day.

650

XXIV

The vale with loud applauses rang,
 The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
 The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
 A purse well filled with pieces broad.
 Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
 And threw the gold among the crowd,
 Who now with anxious wonder scan,
 And sharper glance, the dark gray man;
 Till whispers rose among the throng,
 That heart so free, and hand so strong,
 Must to the Douglas blood belong.
 The old men marked and shook the head,
 To see his hair with silver spread,
 And winked aside, and told each son
 Of feats upon the English done,
 Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
 Was exiled from his native land.
 The women praised his stately form,
 Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;

660

670

What influence did it have with the crowd.

The youth with awe and wonder saw
 His strength surpassing Nature's law.
 Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd, 680
 Till murmurs rose to clamors loud.
 But not a glance from that proud ring
 Of peers who circled round the King
 With Douglas held communion kind,
 Or called the banished man to mind;
 No, not from those who at the chase
 Once held his side the honored place,
 Begirt his board, and in the field
 Found safety underneath his shield;
 For he whom royal eyes disown, 690
 When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
 And bade let loose a gallant stag,
 Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
 Two favorite greyhounds should pull down,
 That venison free and Bourdeaux wine
 Might serve the archery to dine.
 But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
 Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
 The fleetest hound in all the North,— 700
 Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
 She left the royal hounds midway,
 And dashing on the antlered prey,
 Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
 And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
 The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
 By strange intruder broken short,
 Came up, and with his leash unbound
 In anger struck the noble hound.
 The Douglas had endured, that morn,
 The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn, 710

And last, and worst to spirit proud,
 Had borne the pity of the crowd;
 But Lufra had been fondly bred,
 To share his board, to watch his bed,
 And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
 In maiden glee with garlands deck;
 They were such playmates that with name
 Of Lufra Ellen's image came.
 His stifled wrath is brimming high,
 In darkened brow and flashing eye;
 As waves before the bark divide,
 The crowd gave way before his stride.
 Needs but a buffet and no more;
 The groom lies senseless in his gore.
 Such blow no other hand could deal,
 Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

720

XXVI

Then clamored loud the royal train,
 And brandished swords and staves amain.
 But stern the Baron's warning: 'Back!
 Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
 Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
 King James! The Douglas, doomed of old,
 And vainly sought for near and far,
 A victim to atone the war,
 A willing victim, now attends,
 Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.'—
 'Thus is my clemency repaid?
 Presumptuous Lord!' the Monarch said.
 'Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
 Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
 The only man, in whom a foe
 My woman-mercy would not know;
 But shall a Monarch's presence brook
 Injurious blow and haughty look?—

730

740

What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.—
Break off the sports!’—for tumult rose,
And yeomen ’gan to bend their bows,—
‘Break off the sports!’ he said and frowned, 750
‘And bid our horsemen clear the ground.’

XXVII

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep 760
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said,
‘Sir John of Hyndford, ’twas my blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed permit me then 770
A word with these misguided men.—

XXVIII

‘Hear, gentle friends, ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honor, and my cause
I tender free to Scotland’s laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?

What answer does he send back?

Or if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low,
780 That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind
Which knit my country and my kind?
O no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should dread
For me in kindred gore are red;
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me that mother wails her son,
For me that widow's mate expires,
790 For me that orphans weep their sires,
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!

XXIX

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
For blessings on his generous head
Who for his country felt alone,
800 And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men upon the verge of life
Blessed him who stayed the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire.
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head,
810 The Douglas up the hill he led,

And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resigned his honored charge.

XXX

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
'O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear'st thou,' he said, 'the loud acclaim 820
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note;
With like acclaim they hailed the day
When first I broke the Douglas sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
Vain as the leaf upon the stream, 830
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king?—

XXXI

'But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—
What from our cousin, John of Mar?'
'He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound 840
Within the safe and guarded ground;

For some foul purpose yet unknown,—
Most sure for evil to the throne,—
The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summoned his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand arrayed.
The Earl of Mar this morn from Doune
To break their muster marched, and soon
Your Grace will hear of battle fought; 850
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride.'

XXXII

'Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,—
I should have earlier looked to this;
I lost it in this bustling day.—
Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,—
The best of mine shall be thy need.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar, 860
We do forbid the intended war;
Roderick this morn in single fight
Was made our prisoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly!' 870
He turned his steed,—'My liege, I hie,
Yet ere I cross this lily lawn
I fear the broadswords will be drawn.'
The turf the flying courser spurned,
And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII

Ill with King James's mood that day
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the saddened town
The evening sunk in sorrow down. 880
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumored feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms;—the Douglas too,
They mourned him pent within the hold,
'Where stout Earl William was of old.'—
And there his word the speaker stayed,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade. 890
But jaded horsemen from the west
At evening to the Castle pressed,
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumor shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

2



Loch Achray and Benvenue

CANTO SIXTH

THE GUARD-ROOM

I

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and O, what scenes of woe 10
Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam!
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds it stream;
The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble wail.

II

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang 20
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums with rolling note foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barred,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deformed with beard and scar, 30
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fevered with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown,
Showed in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some labored still their thirst to quench;
Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands, 40
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace; 50
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain air;
The Fleming there despised the soil
That paid so ill the laborer's toil;
Their rolls showed French and German name;
And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well trained to wield
The heavy halberd, brand, and shield; 60
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontrolled;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and mid their words
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near, 70
Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighboring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard,—

Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
 And savage oath by fury spoke!—
 At length up started John of Brent,
 A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
 A stranger to respect or fear,
 In peace a chaser of the deer,
 In host a hardy mutineer,
 But still the boldest of the crew
 When deed of danger was to do.
 He grieved that day their games cut short,
 And marred the dicer's brawling sport,
 And shouted loud, 'Renew the bowl!
 And, while a merry catch I troll,
 Let each the buxom chorus bear,
 Like brethren of the brand and spear.'

80

V

SOLDIER'S SONG

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
 Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
 That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
 And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
 Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor!
 Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar!

90

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
 The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
 Says that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
 And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
 Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

100

Our vicar thus preaches,—and why should he not?
 For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;

And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch
 Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
 Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor!
 Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI

The warder's challenge, heard without,
 Stayed in mid-roar the merry shout.
 A soldier to the portal went,— 110
 'Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
 And—beat for jubilee the drum!—
 A maid and minstrel with him come.'
 Bertram, a Fleming, gray and scarred,
 Was entering now the Court of Guard,
 A harper with him, and, in plaid
 All muffled close, a mountain maid,
 Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view
 Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
 'What news?' they roared.—'I only know, 120
 From noon till eve we fought with foe
 As wild and as untamable
 As the rude mountains where they dwell;
 On both sides store of blood is lost,
 Nor much success can either boast.'—
 'But whence thy captives, friend? Such spoil
 As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
 Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
 Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
 Get thee an ape, and trudge the land, 130
 The leader of a juggler band.'

VII

'No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
 After the fight these sought our line,

That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm.'—
'Hear ye his boast?' cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
'Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee.'
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepped between,
And dropped at once the tartan screen:
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May through summer tears.
The 'savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

140

150

VIII

Boldly she spoke: 'Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier's friend,
Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant or the strong
Should exile's daughter suffer wrong.'
Answered De Brent, most forward still
In every feat or good or ill;

160

'I shame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause. 170
Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,'—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,—
'Must bear such age, I think, as thou.—
Hear ye, my mates! I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall.
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!
Beware loose speech, or jesting rough; 180
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough.'

IX

Their Captain came, a gallant young,—
Of Tullibardine's house he sprung,—
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humor light,
And, though by courtesy controlled,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
And dauntless eye;—and yet, in sooth, 190
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.
'Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?

Does thy high quest a knight require, 200
 Or may the venture suit a squire?
 Her dark eye flashed;—she paused and sighed:—
 ‘O what have I to do with pride!—
 Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
 A suppliant for a father’s life,
 I crave an audience of the King.
 Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
 The royal pledge of grateful claims,
 Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James.’

X

The signet-ring young Lewis took 210
 With deep respect and altered look,
 And said: ‘This ring our duties own;
 And pardon, if to worth unknown,
 In semblance mean obscurely veiled,
 Lady, in aught my folly failed.
 Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
 The King shall know what suitor waits.
 Please you meanwhile in fitting bower
 Repose you till his waking hour;
 Female attendance shall obey 220
 Your hest, for service or array.
 Permit I marshal you the way.’
 But, ere she followed, with the grace
 And open bounty of her race,
 She bade her slender purse be shared
 Among the soldiers of the guard.
 The rest with thanks their guerdon took,
 But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
 On the reluctant maiden’s hold
 Forced bluntly back the proffered gold:— 230
 ‘Forgive a haughty English heart,
 And O, forget its ruder part!

The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar.'
With thanks—'twas all she could—the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
240 'My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!
His minstrel I,—to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
250 Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse—
A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right,—deny it not!
'Little we reck,' said John of Brent,
'We Southern men, of long descent;
260 Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord;
Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer

More than to guide the laboring steer,
 I had not dwelt an outcast here.
 Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
 Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see.'

XII

Then, from a rusted iron hook, 270
 A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
 Lighted a torch, and Allan led
 Through grated arch and passage dread.
 Portals they passed, where, deep within,
 Spoke prisoner's moan and fetters' din;
 Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
 Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
 And many a hideous engine grim,
 For wrenching joint and crushing limb,
 By artists formed who deemed it shame 280
 And sin to give their work a name.
 They halted at a low-browed porch,
 And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
 While bolt and chain he backward rolled,
 And made the bar unhasp its hold.
 They entered;—'twas a prison-room
 Of stern security and gloom,
 Yet not a dungeon; for the day
 Through lofty gratings found its way,
 And rude and antique garniture 290
 Decked the sad walls and oaken floor,
 Such as the rugged days of old
 Deemed fit for captive noble's hold.
 'Here,' said De Brent, 'thou mayst remain
 Till the Leech visit him again.
 Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
 To tend the noble prisoner well.'
 Retiring then the bolt he drew,
 And the lock's murmurs growled anew.

Roused at the sound, from lowly bed 300
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought.

XIII

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,
So on his couch lay Roderick Dhu! 310
And oft his fevered limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her seat;—
O, how unlike her course at sea!
Or his free step on hill and lea!
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,—
'What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all! 320
Have they been ruined in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear.'—
For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.—
'Who fought?—who fled?—Old man, be brief;—
Some might,—for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live?—who bravely died?'
'O, calm thee, Chief!' the Minstrel cried,
'Ellen is safe!' 'For that thank Heaven!' 330
'And hopes are for the Douglas given.
The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,

Has never harp of minstrel told
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent.'

XIV

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
340
Checked his swarthy brow and cheeks.
'Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
With measure bold on festal day,
In yon lone isle,—again where ne'er
Shall harper play or warrior hear!—
That stirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory.
Strike it!—and then,—for well thou canst,—
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
350
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray.'
The trembling Bard with awe obeyed,—
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
360
He witnessed from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of song,
And bore him in career along;—
As shallop launched on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,

But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE

'The Minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For ere he parted he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—

370

There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eery nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.

380

Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?—

390

I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero boune for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,

'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array!

XVI

'Their light-armed archers far and near
 Surveyed the tangled ground,
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
 A twilight forest frowned,
 Their barded horsemen in the rear
 The stern battalia crowned.
 No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
 Still were the pipe and drum;
 Save heavy tread, and armor's clang,
 The sullen march was dumb.
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
 Or wave their flags abroad;
 Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
 That shadowed o'er their road.
 Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
 Can rouse no lurking foe,
 Nor spy a trace of living thing,
 Save when they stirred the roe;
 The host moves like a deep-sea wave
 Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
 High-swelling, dark and slow.
 The lake is passed, and now they gain
 A narrow and a broken plain,
 Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
 And here the horse and spearmen pause,
 While, to explore the dangerous glen,
 Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII

'At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell

As all the fiends from heaven that fell
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell! 430
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear.
For life! for life! their flight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued; 440
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood?—
“Down, down,” cried Mar, “your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!”—
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levelled low;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.— 450
“We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their tinchel cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer;
We'll drive them back as tame.”

XVIII

‘Bearing before them in their course
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light, 460

Each targe was dark below;
 And with the ocean's mighty swing,
 When heaving to the tempest's wing,
 They hurled them on the foe.
 I heard the lance's shivering crash,
 As when the whirlwind rends the ash; '
 I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
 As if a hundred anvils rang!
 But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
 Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank.—
 "My banner-man, advance!
 I see," he cried, "their column shake.
 Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
 Upon them with the lance!"—

470

'The horsemen dashed among the rout
 As deer break through the broom;
 Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
 They soon make lightsome room.
 Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne.—
 Where, where was Roderick then!
 One blast upon his bugle-horn
 Were worth a thousand men.
 And reflux through the pass of fear
 The battle's tide was poured;
 Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,
 Vanished the mountain-sword.
 As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
 Receives her roaring linn,
 As the dark caverns of the deep
 Suck the wild whirlpool in,

480

490

'So did the deep and darksome pass
 Devour the battle's mingled mass;
 None linger now upon the plain,
 Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX

'Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within.—
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on; its issue wait
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed;
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.

500

The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.
I heeded not the eddying surge;
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.

510

Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged again,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side,

520

While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shattered band,
Eying their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tattered sail
That flings its fragments to the gale,

And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day.

530

XX

'Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried: "Behold yon isle!—
See! none are left to guard its strand
But women weak, that wring the hand.
'Tis there of yore the robber band

Their booty wont to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den."
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corselet rung,

540

He plunged him in the wave.—
All saw the deed,—the purpose knew,
And to their clamors Benvenue

A mingled echo gave.

The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven.
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.

550

Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.

In vain.—He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.

560

Just then a flash of lightning came;
It tinged the waves and strand with flame.
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand.—
It darkened,—but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan;—
Another flash!—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

570

XXI

‘ “Revenge! revenge!” the Saxons cried;
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and from a crag
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar
A herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord and Roderick bold
Were both, he said, in captive hold.'—
But here the lay made sudden stand;
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy.
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand kept feeble time;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;

580

590

At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp,—his hands are clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
Thus, motionless and moanless, drew
His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu!—
Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit passed;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

600

XXII

LAMENT

'And art thou cold and lowly laid,
Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,
Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade!
For thee shall none a requiem say?—
For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her 'exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honored Pine!

610

'What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.
O, woe for Alpine's honored Pine!

620

'Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again, 630
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honored Pine.'

XXIII

Ellen the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many-colored gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lightened up a tapestried wall, 640
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or if she looked, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared, 650
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claimed with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed.
Those who such simple joys have known
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.

But sudden, see, she lifts her head,
 The window seeks with cautious tread.
 What distant music has the power
 To win her in this woful hour?
 'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
 Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

660

XXIV

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN

'My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
 My idle greyhound loathes his food,
 My horse is weary of his stall,
 And I am sick of captive thrall.
 I wish I were as I have been,
 Hunting the hart in forest green,
 With bended bow and bloodhound free,
 For that's the life is meet for me.

670

I hate to learn the ebb of time
 From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
 Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
 Inch after inch, along the wall.
 The lark was wont my matins ring,
 The sable rook my vespers sing;
 These towers, although a king's they be,
 Have not a hall of joy for me.

680

No more at dawning morn I rise,
 And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
 Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
 And homeward wend with evening dew;
 A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
 And lay my trophies at her feet,
 While fled the eve on wing of glee,—
 That life is lost to love and me!

XXV

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The listener had not turned her head, 690
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdown's graceful Knight was near.
She turned the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.
'O welcome, brave Fitz-James!' she said;
'How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt—' 'O say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give, 700
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come! 'tis more than time;
He holds his court at morning prime.'
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear, 710
And gently whispered hope and cheer;
Her faltering steps half led, half stayed,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till at his touch its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even, 720

And from their tissue fancy frames
 Aerial knights and fairy dames.
 Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
 A few faint steps she forward made,
 Then slow her drooping head she raised,
 And fearful round the presence gazed;
 For him she sought who owned this state,
 The dreaded Prince whose will was fate!—
 She gazed on many a princely port
 Might well have ruled a royal court;
 On many a splendid garb she gazed,—
 Then turned bewildered and amazed,
 For all stood bare; and in the room
 Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
 To him each lady's look was lent,
 On him each courtier's eye was bent;
 Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
 He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
 The centre of the glittering ring,—
 And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King!

730

740

XXVII

As wreath of snow on mountain-breast
 Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
 Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
 And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
 No word her choking voice commands,—
 She showed the ring,—she clasped her hands.
 O, not a moment could he brook,
 The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
 Gently he raised her,—and, the while,
 Checked with a glance the circle's smile;
 Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
 And bade her terrors be dismissed.—
 'Yes, fair, the wandering poor Fitz-James
 The fealty of Scotland claims.

750

To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask naught for Douglas;—yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven;
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong. 760
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamor loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern
With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our throne.—
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow? 770
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid.'

XXVIII

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On nature's raptures long should pry; 780
He stepped between—'Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils,—for Stirling's tower

Of yore the name of Snowdown claims,
 And Normans call me James Fitz-James. 790
 Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
 Thus learn to right the injured cause.'
 Then, in a tone apart and low,—
 'Ah, little traitress! none must know .
 What idle dream, what lighter thought,
 What vanity full dearly bought,
 Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
 My spell-bound steps to Benvenue
 In dangerous hour, and all but gave
 Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!' 800
 Aloud he spoke: 'Thou still dost hold
 That little talisman of gold,
 Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring,—
 What seeks fair Ellen of the King?'

XXIX

Full well the conscious maiden guessed
 He probed the weakness of her breast;
 But with that consciousness there came
 A lightening of her fears for Græme,
 And more she deemed the Monarch's ire
 Kindled 'gainst him who for her sire 810
 Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
 And, to her generous feeling true,
 She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
 'Forbear thy suit;—the King of kings
 Alone can stay life's parting wings.
 I know his heart, I know his hand,
 Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand;—
 My fairest earldom would I give
 To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
 Hast thou no other boon to crave? 820
 No other captive friend to save?'

Blushing, she turned her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wished her sire to speak
The suit that stained her glowing cheek.
'Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.
Malcolm, come forth!'—and, at the word,
Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
'For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues, 830
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan
A refuge for an outlawed man,
Dishonoring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme!
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band, 840
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

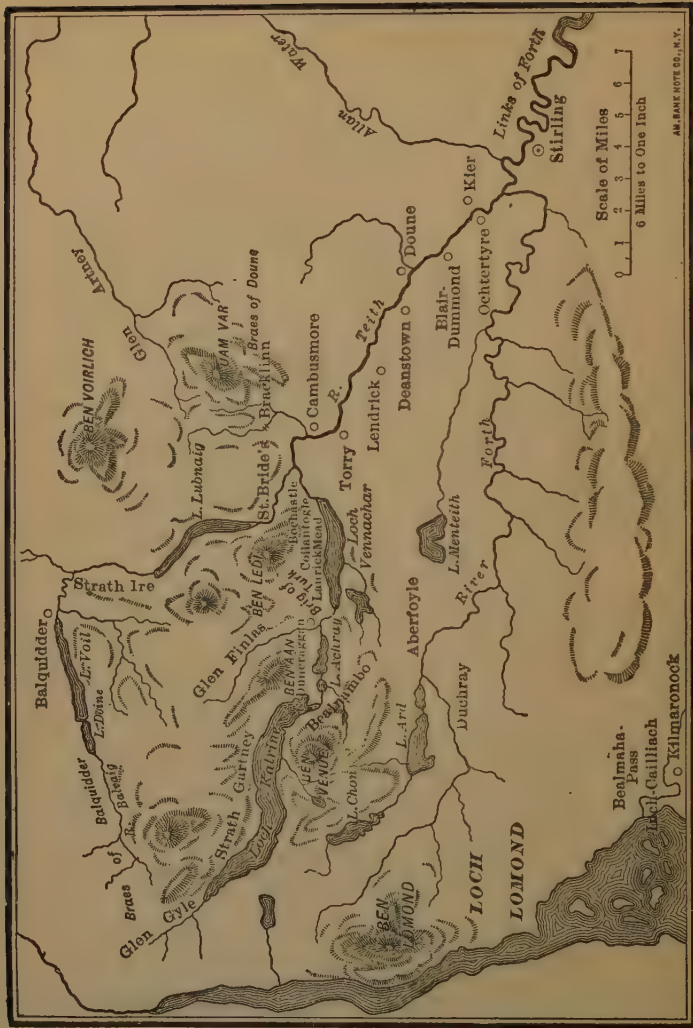
HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp! 851
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.

Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.—
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire, 860
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell;
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!

NOTES AND COMMENT



Map illustrating *The Lady of the Lake*

NOTES AND COMMENT

CANTO I

Harp of the North. The English have always been a story-loving people. Before they came to England, while they were living in what is now Holland and Denmark, there were among them men who composed long poems telling the brave deeds of half-mythical heroes and chanted them to the accompaniment of the harp. Some of these harpists lived at the courts of tribal chieftains or petty kings; others wandered from place to place, welcomed and rewarded wherever they went. All through the Middle Ages, and even later, we hear of these minstrels not only in England but elsewhere in Europe. Their history is most interesting, and toward the last most pathetic; for other forms of entertainment crowded in with advancing civilization, and other kinds of poetry, written for the eye rather than for the ear, became popular. The wandering minstrel is no longer seen, though we think of him, perhaps, when we listen to the street singer or even the hand-organ grinder. The old lays are forgotten, many of them, though not a few are preserved in such collections as *Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, which Scott read with eagerness and all but committed to memory when a schoolboy, and Scott's own *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

In the first three stanzas, which serve as introduction to the entire poem, the author expresses regret that the minstrel has entirely disappeared even from Scotland, where he was last to be found, and announces that the poem which follows is patterned after the gleeman's song of long ago—an attempt to revive interest in this old form of poetry. He personifies Scottish minstrelsy, addressing it as Harp of the North, at the same time presenting to the reader's imagination a fanciful picture of a real harp hanging on a witch-elm

near St. Fillan's spring, as if left there years ago by the last of the minstrels. Why this particular spot is chosen we can but guess; perhaps because the place is one of natural beauty in the heart of a region romantic in history and legend. St. Fillan is said to have been the favorite saint of Robert Bruce, whose deeds furnish appropriate material for the minstrel's art, as one may see by reading *Lord of the Isles*. Following this pathetic picture is one in marked contrast, of the olden days in Caledon (the Roman name for Scotland) when the harper was in his glory, welcomed at every castle and delighting hall and bower with his songs of "knighthood's dauntless deed and beauty's matchless eye."

31. Glenartney. Scott's poems may be read with appreciation and enjoyment even though the reader does not know the precise location of every place mentioned; it is even possible that something may be lost by too close a study of the story's geography. A map has been furnished, however, to this edition, on which most of the places mentioned can be found. *Bonnie Scotland* by A. R. Hope Moncrieff (Scribners), beautifully illustrated in colors, gives an admirable idea of the entire region. If this inexpensive volume is not available, the reader will find his imagination aided by keeping in mind the following terms often found combined in geographical names:—

aber: a mouth or confluence

beal: a narrow pass

ben: a mountain, hill, or peak

brae: the brow or side of a hill

brig: a bridge

craig: a crag or rock

down: a hill

dun: a small hill

ford: a shallow crossing

glen: a secluded and narrow valley

inch: an island

links: the ground bordering a winding stream

linn: a waterfall, a precipice, or a ravine

mead: a meadow

strath: a river valley of some size

51. Copse. This is an unusual word, and there are many such in the poem. While the story can in large measure be understood without a knowledge of the meaning of every term, it cannot be fully enjoyed without frequent reference to the dictionary. Here is an excellent opportunity for the young reader to enlarge his vocabu-

lary, particularly as regards poetical expressions. Such terms may not be needed for every-day use; they are necessary, however, to one who wishes to read intelligently.

66. Cairn. The dictionary defines *cairn* as a mound or heap of stones, used as a memorial. But poets often employ words in unusual ways. Perhaps Scott wished to suggest a crag used as a lookout. If so, why did he not use crag instead of cairn?

84. Shrewdly: severely.

108. For twice that day, etc. If the stag swam the river twice, on which side must he be? Is this one of Scott's slips?

127. Quarry: a technical term applied to the animal hunted.

138. Whinyard: a short sword.

145. Trosachs (now usually spelled *Trossachs*). The name means bristling country. It is a wooded valley lying between Loch Katrine and Loch Achray. Although a wild region in Scott's time, and romantic even to-day, the tourist finds a good road winding through it now, and on the shore of Achray a castle-like hotel. Another hotel is found on the west shore of Loch Katrine, near the upper end. Travel between the two hotels is by coach and steamer, a delightful trip taken by thousands every summer, who go from Edinburgh to Glasgow by way of Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond. The journey from city to city takes but one or two days.

196. Huge as the tower: that is, the Tower of Babel. See *Genesis* xi, 1-9.

202. Pagod: pagoda.

213. Each plant or flower. In some respects Scott is a careless writer, but the nature descriptions found in his poems are, as a rule, carefully done. He had a good eye for little things as well as for large, and a wonderful memory which preserved what he saw and liked. No doubt all the flowers and trees mentioned in this description were actually seen by the poet, and possibly jotted down in his note-book; they are not the product of his imagination.

274. Wildering: bewildering.

285. Cloister: monastery or convent.

302. Beshrew: a polite equivalent for *plague take*. *Shrew* is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning *a biter*.

313. Highland plunderers. "The clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighborhood of Loch Katrine," writes Scott, "were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory [*i.e.*, pillaging and plundering] excursions upon their Lowland neighbors."

344. A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace. The Naiads, in Greek mythology, are nymphs of fountains, lakes, and rivers; Dryads are nymphs of the woodlands, and Oreads nymphs of the mountains. The three Graces, attendants of Venus, characterize grace, beauty, and joy. Their names are Euphrosyne, Aglaia, and Thalia.

363. Snood: a hair ribbon worn by Scottish maidens.

438. A couch was pulled. The couch, the reader readily guesses, was of fragrant, purple heather.

443. Rood: a cross or crucifix.

458. Old Allan-bane foretold. Here and elsewhere in the poem we are shown the superstitions of the Highlanders, superstitions which do not seem out of place in poetry, though they have long since been swept away. They fascinated Scott the antiquary, much as ghost tales fascinate young and old to-day. In his notes to this poem Scott mentions a number of once highly respected authors whose writings reveal unquestioning belief in powers such as Allan-bane is given.

475. Errant-knight: a knight-errant, or one traveling in search of adventure, happiest, perhaps, when rescuing maidens in distress by doing deeds of high daring—fronting "each high emprise."

476. Sooth: trustworthy.

546. Target: a shield. "A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment." (Scott)

573. Ferragus or Ascabart: giants who figure in mediaeval romances, one forty feet high, the other but thirty.

580. Though more than kindred knew. Evidently Scott means that Ellen's love for Margaret was that of a daughter for a mother. Later we learn that Margaret is Ellen's aunt, her mother's sister.

596. Wot: knows.

638. Pibroch: bagpipe.

657. Reveillé: the morning signal, by drum or bugle, for soldiers to get up.

731. Douglas. To explain at this point who the Douglasses were, why the Knight of Snowdown was so often reminded of them, and why they were a banished race would rob the reader of the pleasure of discovery. It is sufficient to know that they were a numerous and powerful clan, out of favor with the king.

738. Orisons: prayers.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY

1. Explain as many of the following words as you can without referring to the dictionary: *verdant, sylvan, martial, boon, tapestry, filial, lair, covert, cairn, copse, whinyard, target, snood, reveillé, gauntlet, orisons*. 2. Would the story have been as effective had Fitz-James met Ellen while taking a long tramp through the Trossachs? 3. Why does Scott make the chase so furious, all the hunters, save one, outdistanced by the stag? 4. Why does he have the stag escape, the horse die? 5. Is the description of the Trossachs and Loch Katrine so carefully done that you can make a simple topical plan of it? 6. Would the story have been as effective had it begun with a description of the region? 7. Why did Scott delay describing the personal appearance of the hunter till the meeting with Ellen? 8. What hints are thrown out that Ellen is of noble birth? that she has a lover? 9. How do you explain the mystery concerning the invisible harp that played as Ellen sang? 10. What questions concerning the rest of the story are in the reader's mind as he finishes the canto—questions that lead him to read on? 11. In the third stanza, how many words can you discover that were chosen, evidently, because their sound suggests the spirited scene described? 12. How many of the lines in this stanza begin with a stressed or accented syllable? 13. Note how quiet the concluding lines of the stanza are when compared with the first. Are there certain letters which have a hush sound? 14. What in the canto have you enjoyed most? 15. Memorize the fourteenth stanza, or some other that you like better.

1. Describe Ellen's home.

2.

3.

4.

name the characters in Canto I

6. How does Scott arouse your interest in Ellen's father? Are you able to picture any kind of scene?

CANTO II

3. Matin: morning.

29. Plaided. The plaid is a rectangular woolen garment, cross-barred with different colors, formerly worn by Scottish Highlanders.

109. The Graeme. Scott explains in a note that the Graemes, or Grahams, were an old and powerful family which held extensive possessions in the counties of Dunbarton and Stirling.

112. Hall and bower. Hall, in mediaeval times, was the name applied to the main living room; the bower was an apartment for women.

131. Saint Modan: a Scotch abbot of early times. Why Scott chose this particular saint, it is hard to tell; perhaps he thought one abbot as good as another, since many of them played the harp, and one, Saint Dunstan, had a harp which once played an anthem, "without anie man's helpe."

165. In native virtue great. Ellen's father's character is so noble that banishment and loss of fortune cannot cast him down. He is like the oak which bends before (gives) the wind, but does not break.

200. The Lady of the Bleeding Heart. Since the bleeding heart was the emblem of the Douglasses, the reader now knows beyond doubt that the Lady of the Lake is a Douglas. Later we learn that the emblem of Clan-Alpine was a pine-tree.

206. Strathspey: a Highland dance.

216. A Lennox foray. A foray was a pillaging expedition, common enough in the days of which Scott writes. It often meant the burning of buildings and crops and the "lifting" of cattle. What little excuse can be offered for such expeditions is given by Roderick himself in a later canto. The Lennox country borders the lower end of Loch Lomond.

221. Holy-Rood: the royal palace in Edinburgh. The incident reminds us that in Scotland early times were rough times.

236. Dispensation. Since Ellen Douglas and Roderick Dhu were cousins, they could not marry without special permission—dispensation—from the pope.

260. Maronnan's cell. In Kilmaronoch, a small place near the

eastern extremity of Loch Lomond, there was a cell, or chapel, dedicated to St. Maronnan. Later, the place contained a nunnery. Rather than marry Roderick, Ellen will become a nun.

270. Bracklinn's thundering wave. Bracklinn is a waterfall near Callendar.

306. For Tine-man forged. Scott's note explains that Tine-man was a nickname applied to an Earl of Douglas prominent in fourteenth century warfare, because he *tined*, or lost, so many followers. The story of how Tine-man allied himself with Hotspur in rebellion against Henry IV of England has been told by Shakespeare in his play *Henry IV*. It was not uncommon, in early times, to attribute magic powers to the swords of great chieftains.

319. Beltane game: a springtime festival, partly religious, though an occasion for merrymaking.

343. Tartans: woolen plaids, formerly much worn in Scotland.

392. The burden bore. The rowers sang the chorus, keeping time with their oars.

405. Bourgeon: put forth buds.

408. Roderick Vich Alpine dhu. *Dhu* means black. "The line of the text therefore signifies, Black Roderick, the descendant of Alpine." (Scott)

497. Percy's Norman pennon. This was captured by Douglas in the raid which led to the battle of Otterburn in Northumberland, in the year 1388. It was taken in a small skirmish, and the Percy (Hotspur) vowed, in reply to his enemy's taunts, that he should not carry it beyond the border. Douglas bade him come and take it; it should be planted before his tent. The Scotch intrenched themselves at Otterburn. They might have got off clear with their booty; but it was a point of chivalry to give Percy a fair chance of recovering his pennon. Hotspur hurried after them without waiting for reinforcements, which were coming up, and attacked the Scots on a moonlight night (the 19th of August). The Scots held their own, though Douglas was mortally wounded, and Hotspur and his brother, with many others, were taken prisoners. The battle and the victory were perfectly useless; it was really a tourney, when men fought for mere fighting's sake. The memory of the raid is

preserved in the various ballads of Chevy Chase (a corruption of *chevauchée*, a "riding raid"). (Taylor)

506. **Blantyre** priory was near Bothwell Castle.

583. **Strath-Endrick**: south-east of Loch Lomond.

615. **The King's vindictive pride**. "In 1529, James made a convention at Edinburgh, for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers, who, during the license of his minority, and the troubles which followed, had committed many exorbitances. Accordingly he assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, consisting of his principal nobility and their followers, who were directed to bring their hawks and dogs with them, that the monarch might refresh himself with sport during the intervals of military execution. With this array he swept through Ettrick Forest, where he hanged over the gate of his own castle Piers Cockburn of Henderland, who had prepared, according to tradition, a feast for his reception. He caused Adam Scott of Tushielaw also to be executed, who was distinguished by the title of King of the Border. But the most noted victim of justice during that expedition was John Armstrong of Gilnockie, famous in Scottish song, who, confiding in his own supposed innocence, met the King, with a retinue of thirty-six persons, all of whom were hanged at Carlenrig, near the source of the Teviot. The effect of this severity was such that, as the vulgar expressed it, 'the rush-bush kept the cow, and thereafter was great peace and rest a long time, wherethrough the King had great profit; for he had ten thousand sheep going in Ettrick Forest in keeping by Andrew Bell, who made the King as good count of them as they had gone in the bounds of Fife.'" (Scott)

708. **Astound**: astounded.

747. **Nighted**: benighted.

805. **Nor lackey with his freeborn clan**. Roderick means that he will not attempt to win the King's favor by becoming a servile follower.

809. **Henchman**. Perhaps we should call him Roderick's "right-hand man," a faithful follower always in attendance.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY

1. Give synonyms for as many of the following words as you can:

blithe, bootless, sable, guerdon, lackey, spleen, churlish, pibroch, foray, marauding, vindictive. 2. Why does Scott introduce the scene between Ellen and Allan-bane? Is it really needed? 3. Why is Fitz-James brought to the Isle during the chieftain's absence? 4. Compare the way in which Roderick is brought into the story with the way in which Fitz-James is brought in. Which is the more effective? 5. What is gained by having Douglas and Roderick return at the same time? 6. Explain clearly (a) what claim Roderick has on Ellen's affections,¹ (b) why she does not wish to marry him, (c) why an attack from the royal forces is feared. 7. How many rival lovers can you discover? 8. What is best in this canto, the return of Roderick, the return of Douglas, or the quarrel scene? 9. Is Canto II in any respects better than Canto I? 10. Contrast the endings of the two. 11. What new questions arise in the reader's mind as the canto closes? 12. It has been noted that in the third stanza of Canto I the sound suggests the sense. In the Boat Song there is a successful attempt to indicate the measured swing of the rowers. Read it aloud, stressing the syllables in such a way as to indicate the stroke of the oars. 13. Memorize the Boat Song. 14. Write four short paragraphs, using the following as topical sentences: (a) *The return of Roderick is in marked contrast to the return of Douglas.* (b) *The tune played by the bagpipers, properly understood, tells a thrilling story.* (c) *The three songs found in the first two cantos differ widely in character.* (d) *Ellen's position is most trying.*

CANTO III

62. **Rowan:** mountain ash.

65. **Brian the Hermit.** This uncanny character is not entirely Scott's invention, but derived from a legend. In early, superstitious times, such priestlike characters were found among the Scots who lived somewhat remote from civilization. The poet tries to show, by sketching Brian's solitary life, how a hermit might become half-crazed, might in time come to believe that he possessed unusual powers, and eventually be accepted by his clan as a priest—resembling more the Druid than the Christian minister. The Druids were priests among the ancient Celts. They worshiped in forests, re-

garded oak and mistletoe as sacred, and offered human sacrifices. Brian's gruesome life-story is pathetic; the one gleam which relieves its gloom is the hermit's love for his clan.

138. Sable-lettered. Old English manuscripts were written in what is called *black letter* or *old English*. A specimen may be found in a good dictionary.

142. Cabala: a mystical interpretation of the Scriptures.

154. The River Demon. "The River Demon, or River-horse, for it is that form which he commonly assumes, is the Kelpy of the Lowlands, an evil and malicious spirit, delighting to forebode and to witness calamity. He frequents most Highland lakes and rivers; and one of his most memorable exploits was performed upon the banks of Loch Vennachar, in the very district which forms the scene of our action. It consisted in the destruction of a funeral procession, with all its attendants. The "noontide hag," called in Gaelic *Glaslich*, a tall, emaciated, female figure, is supposed in particular to haunt the district of Knoidart. A goblin dressed in antique armor, and having one hand covered with blood, called, from that circumstance, Lham-dearg, or Red-hand, is a tenant of the forests of Glenmore and Rothiemurcus. Other spirits of the desert, all frightful in shape and malignant in disposition, are believed to frequent different mountains and glens of the Highlands, where any unusual appearance, produced by mist, or the strange lights that are sometimes thrown upon particular objects, never fails to present an apparition to the imagination of the solitary and melancholy mountaineer." (Scott)

168. The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream. This spirit takes the form of an old woman, Scott tells us, with a blue mantle and streaming hair. Her scream *boded* or foretold disaster.

171. Shingly: covered with coarse pebbles.

189. A cubit's length. A cubit was originally the length of the forearm.

191. Inch-Cailliach: an island in the lower part of Loch Lomond, containing the clan burying-ground.

297. Three fathom wide. Is such a leap possible from the prow of a moving boat?

310. **Scaur**: cliff.

369. **Coronach**: a funeral wail or song of lament.

386. **Correi**: a hollow or recess in the side of a hill or at the head of a valley.

387. **Cumber**: time of trouble.

485. **Coif-clad**. Upon marrying, the maiden put aside the snood and adopted the coif.

546. **Bracken**: brakes or large ferns.

713. **Ave Maria!** Hail, Mary! This is the beginning of the Catholic prayer addressed to Mary, the mother of Christ.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY

1. Explain the following: *patriarch, anathema, coronach, rendezvous, murky, sepulchral, mien, augured, satyr, chalice*. 2. Explain lines 135-144, 161-2, 465. 3. Reproduce on the black-board the map found on another page and indicate, with red crayon, the course of the fiery cross. 4. What do you find to like in lines 91-110? 5. If you were preparing an illustrated edition of the poem, what eight scenes should you like to have pictured to go with Canto III? 6. If the canto were to be represented by tableaux, what scenes should you choose? 7. Of all the scenes in the canto, which stands out most vividly? 8. Show that the two songs differ from those in the earlier cantos. 9. Why does Scott introduce the funeral and wedding scenes? 10. Scott uses a great many figures of comparison,—simile, metaphor, and personification. A simile is a completely expressed comparison, a metaphor an implied or incompletely expressed comparison, a personification a metaphor in which something not human—a lower animal, an object, or an attribute—is spoken of as if it were human. Find three or four examples of each. 11. What do you like best in this canto? 12. Which of the first three cantos is best? 13. Which do you prefer, the quiet descriptions or the spirited actions like the hunt, the quarrel, and the progress of the fiery cross? 14. Memorize the thirteenth stanza.

CANTO IV

5. **Wilding**: wild.

36. **Boune**: prepared.

42. **Inured bout**: accustomed to endure such trying turns of fortune.

73. **Kerns**: light-armed fighters, usually equipped with but bow and arrow. The heavy-armed soldiers were called gallow-glasses.

82. **Boss**: projection, or knob.

98. **Broke**: cut up. Scott's note is as follows: "Everything belonging to the chase was matter of solemnity among our ancestors; but nothing was more so than the mode of cutting up, or, as it was technically called, *breaking*, the slaughtered stag. The forester had his allotted portion; the hounds had a certain allowance; and to make the division as general as possible, the very birds had their share also. 'There is a little gristle,' says Turberville, 'which is upon the spoone of the bris-kit, which we call the raven's bone; and I have seen in some places a raven so wont and accustomed to it that she would never fail to croak and cry for it all the time you were in breaking up of the deer, and would not depart till she had it.'"

150. **Glaive**: sword.

152. **Silver star**. Just as the pine-tree was Roderick's symbol, so the silver star appeared on Moray's banner. A *pale* (line 153) was "a broad perpendicular stripe in an escutcheon."

160. **Earn**. Loch Earn does not show in our map. It is a little north of Ben Voirlich.

174. **Stance**: foundation.

223. **Trowed**: believed

231. **Cambus-kenneth's fane**: an abbey about a mile east of Stirling. *Fane* is another word for temple or sanctuary.

261. **Alice Brand**. Scott found the plot for this little ballad in an old collection of Danish songs.

262. **Mavis and merle**: thrush and blackbird.

267. **Wold**: open country, as opposed to the woods.

277. **Pall**: fine material for cloaks such as the nobility wore.

What does the word mean now, and how did the change in meaning come about?

283. **Darkling**: in the dark.

285. **Vair**: a kind of fur worn by the well-to-do. The *russet gray* was the home-spun worn by country people.

298. **Woned**: dwelt.

306. **Fairies' fatal green**. The elves wore green; therefore they were irritated when they saw mortals wearing the green costume so common among hunters.

308. **Wert christened man**. In a note Scott explains that the elves envied mortals who had been christened, believing them to be superior. When a "christened man" fell into their power, they gave him "a certain precedence."

330. **Kindly blood**: the blood of one of the kin.

357. **Wist**: knew.

387. **Bourne**: boundary

392. **Scathe**: harm.

419. **That fatal bait**. Ellen means that by showing her pleasure when, on his earlier visit, the knight flattered her with courtly compliments, she had given sufficient encouragement to lure him back again.

446. **As death**: as if death.

471. **Lordship**: lands.

473. **Reck of**: care for.

506. **Weeds**: an old word meaning garments. Is the word ever used now for garments?

531. **Allan**. The Allan and the Devan are two small branches joining the Forth near Stirling.

590. **The toils are pitched**. The hidden meaning in the song is easily guessed. The hunters, referred to later as the chase, are Clan Alpine; the stag of ten—that is, a stag with ten-pointed antlers, an unusually large number—is Fitz-James, for whom the net is set (toils are pitched); the wounded doe is Blanche.

657. **Shred**: cut.

672. **Wreak**: avenge.

722. The summer solstice. The meaning is that even in summer the nights are cold in the Highlands.

772. A mighty augury is laid. This refers to the Taghairm prophecy.

788. Thy warrant is thy sword. Beyond the ford, the knight must depend not upon Highland guide but upon his sword.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY

1. Explain: *scatheless*, *boss*, *auspicious*, *bounce*, *rife*, *apprehensive*, *boon*, *woned*, *pall and vair*, *wood and wold*, *weeds*. 2. Make clear the meaning of lines 102-4, 468-71, 743-48. 3. The boat which bears Ellen and Fitz-James to the Isle is also called skiff, shallop, and barge. Do you recall any of Scott's favorite substitutes for the word *sword*? Why does he employ synonyms so freely? 4. Which is the more gruesome, the taghairm ceremony or the preparation of the fiery cross? 5. The conversation between Ellen and the minstrel in the second canto serves to explain the situation; what is learned from their conversation in the fourth canto? 6. What was Scott's purpose in bringing in Blanche of Devan? 7. What do you find to like in stanzas xxix-xxxi? This is a good passage to memorize. 8. What is the most dramatic scene in the canto? 9. Which canto thus far has the best ending? 10. Write brief paragraphs, beginning with the following sentences: (a) *Allan-bane possesses a wonderful harp.* (b) *The minstrel is also a gifted dreamer.* (c) *Highland hospitality has been illustrated in many ways.* (d) *It is difficult to decide at what point in the story Fitz-James is most attractive—as hunter, as guest at Roderick's home, as suitor at Ellen's cave, or as he appears in the campfire scene.* (e) *Among the attractive similes in this canto are those found in the following passages: lines 199-203, 299-300, 544-47.* 11. Tell the story of Alice Brand, beginning *Once upon a time*. 12. Tell the story of Blanche of Devan.

CANTO V

18. Gael: Highlander.

123. Not then claimed sovereignty his due. Before King James was old enough to rule, the kingdom was governed by regents. Albany, one of these, was not strong enough to keep the realm in peace. There were many feuds between prominent families, and frays such as the one referred to in the sixth stanza were not uncommon, even in Holy-Rood, the royal palace.

164. The Gael, of plain and river heir. "So far, indeed, was a Creagh, or foray, from being held disgraceful, that a young chief was always expected to show his talents for command so soon as he assumed it, by leading his clan on a successful enterprise of this nature, either against a neighboring sept [clan], for which constant feuds usually furnished an apology, or against the *Sassenach*, Saxons, or Lowlanders, for which no apology was necessary. The Gael, great traditional historians, never forgot that the Lowlands had, at some remote period, been the property of their Celtic forefathers, which furnished an ample vindication of all the ravages that they could make on the unfortunate districts which lay within their reach." (Scott)

182. Save to fulfil an augury. What augury?

253. Jack: a padded leather coat of mail.

298. Three mighty lakes: Katrine, Achray, and Vennachar. See map.

302-3. Rome. Before the English came to England, the island was for a long time held by the Romans. The eagle was the emblem of the Roman army.

330. Between the living and the dead. It will be recalled that Brian's father, so the legend ran, was a phantom, and that his mother died at child-birth.

356. Carpet knight: a knight who has won his title not by showing valor in field of battle but by polite and flattering behavior at court.

505. Fleet career. To make sure that it was possible to cover so great a distance in the time given, Scott galloped from Loch Vennachar to Stirling. The poet was a skilled horseman and fond of furious riding.

550. A Douglas by his sovereign bled. "The fate of William,

eighth Earl of Douglas, whom James II stabbed in Stirling Castle with his own hand, and while under his royal safe-conduct, is familiar to all who read Scottish history. Murdock Duke of Albany, Duncan Earl of Lennox, his father-in-law, and his two sons, Walter and Alexander Stuart, were executed at Stirling in 1425. They were beheaded upon an eminence without the Castle walls, but making part of the same hill, from whence they could behold their strong Castle of Doune and their extensive possessions. This "heading hill," as it was sometimes termed, bears commonly the less terrible name of Hurley-hacket, from its having been the scene of courtly amusement alluded to by Sir David Lindsay, who says of the pastimes in which the young King was engaged:

Some harled him to the Hurley-hacket;
which consisted in sliding—in some sort of chair, it may be supposed—from top to bottom of a smooth bank. The boys of Edinburgh, about twenty years ago, used to play at the hurly-hacket on the Calton Hill, using for their seat a horse's skull." (Scott)

558. The Franciscan steeple: the steeple of the Greyfriars Church.

562. Morrice-dancers. *Morrice* is a corrupt form of *Moorish*. The Morrice dance was of Spanish origin but was very popular in English merry-making.

564. The burghers hold their sports to-day. "Every burgh of Scotland of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn *play*, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. Stirling, a usual place of royal residence, was not likely to be deficient in pomp upon such occasions, especially since James V was very partial to them. His ready participation in these popular amusements was one cause of his acquiring the title of the King of the Commons, or *Rex Plebeiorum*, as Lesley has Latinized it." (Scott)

613. Butts: targets.

614. Robin Hood: an English outlaw famous in song and story. He and Friar Tuck will be remembered by those who have read *Ivanhoe*. The other characters mentioned in the twenty-second stanza are associated with Robin Hood. Maid Marian, Robin's mistress, takes the part of queen of the May. A good description of such outdoor revels will be found in the fourteenth chapter of Scott's *Abbot*. That the revelers at times grew unruly is shown in the following note by Sir Walter: "The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favorite frolic at such festivals as we are describing. This sporting, in which kings did not disdain to be actors, was prohibited in Scotland upon the Reformation, by a statute of the sixth Parliament of Queen Mary, c. 61, A. D. 1555, which ordered, under heavy penalties, that 'na manner of person be chosen Robert Hude, nor Little John, Abbot of Unreason, Queen of May, nor otherwise.' But in 1561 the 'rascal multitude,' says John Knox, 'were stirred up to make a Robin Hude, whilk enormity was of mony years left and damned by statute and act of Parliament; yet would they not be forbidden.' Accordingly they raised a very serious tumult, and at length made prisoners the magistrates who endeavored to suppress it, and would not release them till they extorted a formal promise that no one should be punished for his share of the disturbance. It would seem, from the complaints of the General Assembly of the Kirk, that these profane festivities were continued down to 1592. Robin Hood was, to say the least, equally successful in maintaining his ground against the reformed clergy of England; for the simple and evangelical Latimer complains of coming to a country church where the people refused to hear him because it was Robin Hood's day, and his mitre and rochet were fain to give way to the village pastime"

630. Archer wight: a mere archer.

637. Larbet. Larbet and Alloa are towns near Stirling.

660. The Ladies' Rock. This, we are told, is a little elevation in the valley below the castle, where the ladies were accustomed to view the games.

887. Stout Earl William. This is the William Douglas referred to in line 550.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY

1. Explain: *matins, arraignment, augury, target and claymore, carpet knight, invulnerable, banditti, buffet.*
2. Would the combat have been as exciting had there been spectators? had the combatants not been rival lovers? had Brian's prophecy been different? had Fitz-James not avowed to avenge Blanche of Devan? had Roderick not entertained Fitz-James? had the combatants been less evenly matched?
3. In what ways are "martial Faith and Courtesy's bright star" shown in this canto?
4. With whom does the reader sympathize during the combat?
5. Did Scott introduce the games at Stirling because the account was needed in the story, or because he wished to show the customs of long ago?
6. Are the contests interesting? all the events probable?
7. Why did Douglas return to Stirling?
8. Does Fitz-James know that Douglas is Ellen's father?
9. How do you explain Fitz-James's harsh treatment of Douglas?
10. Does the canto end effectively?
11. What questions remain unanswered in the reader's mind?
12. Memorize stanzas ix-x.
13. Write paragraphs beginning with the following sentences:
 - (a) *Fitz-James has a number of reasons for hating Roderick.*
 - (b) *The conversation between the rival lovers leaves the reader with a far better impression of Roderick's character.*
 - (c) *The games at Stirling differed in a number of respects from an athletic meet of to-day.*

CANTO VI

3. **Caitiff:** miserable creature.
60. **Halberd:** a long, metal-pointed pole with a battleaxe near the end.
90. **Poule:** Paul.
92. **Black-jack:** a pitcher made of leather.
93. **Sack:** a Spanish wine.
98. **Beelzebub:** "Prince of devils." In *Paradise Lost* he is

the principal follower of Satan. Apollyon is "king of the bottomless pit."

103. Placket and pot: a figurative expression for "women and wine," which the coarse singer declares are the reward received by the vicar for his services as priest.

104. Lurch: swindle.

136. Purvey: furnish.

183. Tullibardine: the residence of the Murrays in Perthshire.

199. Errant damosel. In Spencer's *Fairy Queen* appears such a lady, or damsel, in company with an errant knight who has promised to redress her wrongs.

234. Barret-cap: a flat cap of cloth, formerly worn by soldiers.

295. Leech: doctor.

306. Prore: prow.

377. Erne: eagle.

404. Barded: armored.

405. Battalia: army.

414. Vaward: vanguard, or a body of troops marching in advance of the main army to guard against surprise.

452. Tinchel: "a circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the *tinchel*." (Scott)

539. Bonnet-pieces. The bonnet piece was a coin bearing the king's head with a bonnet instead of a crown.

665. Perch and hood. The hawk or falcon was carried about on the hunter's wrist, sometimes secured by a light chain. It was blinded by a hood, which was removed whenever the hawk made a flight.

707. Morning prime. Literally, this means six o'clock; as employed in this line, it means early morning.

740. And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's king! This announcement causes no surprise, for the secret has been guessed earlier in the story; the reader, however, experiences pleasurable excitement, through his sympathy with the characters.

The story finished, it is but natural that the reader should

care to know whether the tale is, wholly or in part, true. There was, of course, a Scottish sovereign named James V, son of that James IV whose death, together with ten thousand followers, is told of by Scott in *Marmion*, *A Tale of Flodden Field*, and father of the unfortunate Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, whose story is told in *The Monastery*. At the time of his father's death, James was less than two years old. For a time his mother Margaret was regent; but she soon married Douglas, Earl of Angus, a brave, handsome, rash young man, thereby becoming so unpopular that the regency was taken from her and given to Albany, nearest male relative of the king. Albany, however, was not strong enough to govern successfully so turbulent a people as the Scots were in the period following the defeat at Flodden, and eventually the Earl of Angus gained the upper hand. Though pretending to rule for the young king, he really kept the boy a prisoner, and bestowed the leading offices of government upon his relatives. The story of the king's daring escape—of how, after two unsuccessful attempts to get away from the Douglasses, he at length succeeded in gaining Stirling Castle, makes interesting reading. All Douglasses were banished from the realm, never to return during the king's lifetime.

The Douglas of the story is an imaginary uncle of the Earl of Angus. Yet note the following, taken from Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*: "Archibald Douglas of Kilspindie, the Earl of Angus's uncle, had been a personal favorite of the King before the disgrace of his family. He was so much recommended to James by his great strength, manly appearance, and skill in every kind of warlike exercise, that he was wont to call him his Graysteil, after the name of a champion in a romance then popular. Archibald, becoming rather an old man, and tired of his exile in England, resolved to try the King's mercy. He thought that as they had been so well acquainted formerly, and as he had never offended James personally, he might find favor from their old intimacy. He therefore threw himself in the King's way one day as he returned from hunting in the park at Stirling. It was several years since James had seen him, but he knew him

at a great distance, by his firm and stately step, and said, Yonder is my Graysteil, Archibald of Kilspindie! But when they met, he showed no appearance of recognizing his old servant. Douglas turned, and still hoping to obtain a glance of favorable recollection, run along by the King's side; and although James trotted his horse hard against the hill, and Douglas wore a heavy shirt of mail under his clothes, for fear of assassination, yet Graysteil was at the castle gate as soon as the King. James passed him and entered the castle; but Douglas, exhausted with exertion, sat down at the door, and asked for a cup of wine. The hatred of the King against the name of Douglas was so well known that no domestic about the court dared procure for the old warrior even this trifling refreshment. The King blamed, indeed, his servants for their discourtesy, and even said that but for his oath never to employ a Douglas, he would have received Archibald of Kilspindie into his service, as he had formerly known him a man of great ability. Yet he sent his commands to his poor Graysteil to retire to France, where he died broken-hearted soon afterwards."

Among the notable events of the young King's reign are numerous expeditions against the clans of the Border and of the Highlands, who, during the regency, had committed many lawless deeds. On one of these expeditions the King and his followers took with them their hawks and hounds, partly for sport, partly to allay suspicion. Only by such strategy could he lay hands upon chieftains who otherwise, on the approach of a royal army, would have fled to the hills. There are ghastly tales of several chieftains of the Border who, thinking the King and his followers had come as guests, prepared feasts in elaborate fashion, and were hanged for their pains.

Many are the stories told of the experiences of James while disguised. For the purpose of seeing that justice was done, partly too to gratify his love for daring adventure, he often laid aside his royal costume and mingled with the common people. One such adventure may have suggested certain scenes in *The Lady of the Lake*; "Upon another occasion King James, being

alone and in disguise, fell into a quarrel with some gipsies, or other vagrants, and was assaulted by four or five of them. This chanced to be very near the bridge of Cramond; so the King got on the bridge, which, as it was high and narrow, enabled him to defend himself with his sword against the number of persons by whom he was attacked. There was a poor man threshing corn in a barn near by, who came out on hearing the noise of the scuffle, and seeing one man defending himself against numbers, gallantly took his part with his flail to such good purpose that the gipsies were obliged to fly. The husbandman then took the King into his barn, brought him a towel and water to wash the blood from his face and hands, and finally walked with him a little way towards Edinburgh, in case he should be again attacked. On the way, the King asked his companion what and who he was. The laborer answered that his name was John Hourison, and that he was a bondsman on the farm of Braehead, near Cramond, which belonged to the King of Scotland. James then asked the poor man if there was any wish in the world which he would particularly desire should be gratified; and honest John confessed he should think himself the happiest man in Scotland were he but proprietor of the farm on which he wrought as a laborer. He then asked the King, in turn, who *he* was; and James replied, as usual, that he was the Goodman of Ballengiech, a poor man who had a small appointment about the palace; but he added that if John Hourison would come to see him on the next Sunday, he would endeavor to repay his manful assistance, and at least give him the pleasure of seeing the royal apartments.

“John put on his best clothes, as you may suppose, and appearing at a postern gate of the palace, inquired for the Goodman of Ballengiech. The King had given orders that he should be admitted; and John found his friend the Goodman of Ballengiech, in the same disguise which he had formerly worn. The King, still preserving the character of an inferior officer of the household, conducted John Hourison from one apartment of the palace to another, and was amused with his wonder and his

remarks. At length he asked him if he should like to see the King; to which John replied nothing would delight him so much, if he could do so without giving offence. The Goodman of Ballengiech, of course, undertook that the King would not be angry. 'But,' said John, 'how am I to know his grace from the nobles who will be all about him?' 'Easily,' replied his companion; 'all others will be bare-headed, the King alone will wear his hat or bonnet.'

"So speaking, King James introduced the countryman into a great hall which was filled by the nobility and officers of the crown. John was a little frightened, and drew close to his attendant; but was still unable to distinguish the King. 'I told you that you should know him by his wearing his hat,' said his conductor. 'Then,' said John, after he had again looked around the room, 'it must be either you or me, for all but us two are bareheaded.'

"The King laughed at John's fancy; and, that the good yeoman might have occasion for mirth also, he made him a present of the farm of Braehead, which he had wished so much to possess, on condition that John Hourison, or his successors, should be ready to present an ewer and basin for the King to wash his hands, when his Majesty should come to Holyrood palace, or should pass the Bridge of Cramond. Accordingly, in the year 1822, when George IV came to Scotland, the descendant of John Hourison of Braehead, who still possesses the estate which was given to his ancestor, appeared at a solemn festival and offered his Majesty water from a silver ewer, that he might perform the service by which he held his lands."

The above tale is found in Chapter XXIV of the first volume of Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, a book that should be better known by young American readers.

Other characters in the story, Roderick, Malcolm, Allan-bane, are purely imaginary, yet typical of the times with which the story deals. The battle of Beal'an Duine is imaginary, yet at a somewhat later period a skirmish took place at this pass in the Trossachs. The fighting ended with a dramatic

incident quite similar to the one related by Scott, a swimmer being killed by a blow from a tomahawk in the hand of a woman, just as he was about to land on the island.

Thus it is seen that the story is based partly on history, partly on legend, and in part it is purely imaginary. The pictures given of the Trossachs region are true; and equally true, in a general way, are the glimpses here and there of customs and manners long since faded into tradition.

802. Talisman: any object supposed to work wonders; a charm. This suggests *The Talisman*, one of Scott's Crusader tales.

813. Grace: pardon.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY

1. Some critics object to the guardroom scene with which the canto begins. Does it seem objectionable to you? 2. What difficulty confronts one who tells a story wholly or in part historical? 3. What is gained by having the minstrel tell of the battle? 4. Why have him tell it to Roderick? 5. Why have Roderick die? Would it be equally dramatic to end the tale by having the chieftain pardoned? 6. Why not end the story with an account of Roderick's burial? 7. How do you account for the fact that the similes in the description of the battle have to do with the ocean in angry mood, mountain cascades, whirlwinds, whirlpools, earthquakes? 8. Why do most similes take the reader to nature? 9. Who sings the Lay of the Imprisoned Huntsman? 10. Where in the poem does Ellen appear most attractive? 11. What character in the poem do you most admire, and for what reasons? 12. What, on the whole, is the most exciting incident? the most vivid description? the best song? the greatest surprise? 13. What purpose is served by the introductions and the songs? 14. What evidence does the poem contain that Scott was a reading man? that he was an antiquary? that he was a lover of nature? that he was a lover of outdoor pastimes? 15. What have you found to like in Scott's way of telling a story? 16. Memorize two or three stanzas. 17. Imagining yourself Ellen Douglas, write a letter

to Lady Margaret—such a letter as she may have written the day following the one which brings the story to a close.

THE METRICAL PLAN OF THE POEM

A line of poetry is thought of as made up of syllable-groups, each group containing a stressed or accented syllable; hence in each line there are as many feet, as the groups are called, as there are stressed syllables. A line is called monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, etc., according as it contains one, two, three, four, five, or six feet. A metrical foot of two syllables the first of which receives the stress is called a trochee. A foot of two syllables the second of which receives the stress is called an iambus. A foot of three syllables the first of which receives the stress is called a dactyl. A foot of three syllables the last of which receives the stress is called an anapaest. By combining, we get such terms as iambic trimeter, trochaic tetrameter, etc., which are convenient for expressing the number and kind of feet in a given line. This very meager explanation may help the young reader to understand in some measure the metrical plan of *The Lady of the Lake*; a complete understanding, however, can be gained only through careful study of a good manual of versification, or better still, through painstaking instruction on the part of a skilled teacher.

The main part of the poem is written in iambic tetrameter lines which rime in couplets; that is, each line contains four iambic feet, and the first line rimes with the second, the third with the fourth, and so on. Thus the scansion of the first four lines of the first stanza is as follows:

The stag|at éve|had drunk|his fill
Where danced|the moon|on Mo|nan's rill,
And deep|his mid|night lair|had made
In lone|Glenart|ney's ha|zel shade.

A long poem written in this meter would soon grow tiresome were there not slight variation now and then to break the monotony. The first foot in a line is often a trochee, and an anapaest frequently takes the place of an iambus. Notice, for example, the line

Yelled on|the view|the o|pening pack.

Moreover the monotony is broken agreeably by the introduction of songs presenting a variety of meters. A number of these songs we will consider separately.

The first, in Canto I, is written in trochaic tetrameter measure; that is, each line contains four trochees, though some lines are truncated. A truncated line is one in which one or two unaccented syllables are missing at the end. The riming scheme is as follows: the first and third, second and fourth, fifth and seventh, sixth and eighth, ninth and tenth, and eleventh and twelfth lines rime; or, as it may be more conveniently indicated, the riming scheme is ab ab cd cd ee ff.

Soldier,|rest! thy|warfare|o'er,

Sleep the|sleep that|knows no|breaking;

Dream of|battled|fields no|more,

Days of|danger|nights of|waking.

Notice that by means of indention the riming plan is made obvious.

In Allan's song in Canto II, the second and fifth lines are iambic trimeter, the rest iambic tetrameter, the riming system being ab aab cc dd, thus:

Not fas|ter yon|der row|ers' might

Flings from|their oars|the spray,

Not fas|ter yon|der rip|pling bright,

That tracks|the shal|lop's course|in light,

Melts in|the lake|away,
 Than men|from mem|ory|erase
 The ben|efits|of for|mer days;
 Then, strán|ger, go!|good speed|the while,
 Nor think|again|of the lón|ly isle.

The Boat Song, in this same canto, is written in the less common dactyllic measure, the first four, the seventh, and the tenth lines being dactyllic tetrameter, the remaining lines dactyllic dimeter. The riming scheme is ab ab cc de ed.

Hail to the|Chief who in|triumph ad|vances!
 Honored and|blessed be the|ever-green|Pine!
 Long may the|tree, in his|banner that|glances,
 Flourish, the|shelter and|grace of our|line!
 Heaven send it|happy dew,
 Earth lend it|sap anew,
 Gayly to|bourgeon and|broadly to|grow,
 While every|Highland glen
 Sends our shout|back again,
 'Roderigh Vich|Alpine dhu,|ho! ier|oe!'

Notice that the final foot in many lines is a trochee and in certain cases the trochee is truncated; or all the final feet may be considered dactyls some of which are truncated. Note too that in the second stanza added unaccented syllables are found at the beginning of lines three and four; or these two lines may be considered anapaestic.

The beautiful Coronach in Canto III in dimeter lines riming ab ab cd cd, may be scanned as anapaestic, relieved by an occasional iambus and by an added syllable at the end of the line, thus:

He is gone|on the moun|tain, .
 He is lost|to the for|est,
 Like a sum|mer-dried foun|tain
 When our need|was the sor|est.

Some, however, consider the meter amphibrachic. An amphibrach is a metrical foot of three syllables the second of which is stressed. Then the scansion is as follows:

He|is gone on|the mountain,
 He|is lost to|the forest,
 Like|a summer-|dried fountain,
 When|our need was|the sorest.
 The font, re|appearing,
 From|the rain-drops|shall borrow,
 But|to us comes|no cheering,
 To Duncan|no morrow!

Concerning the rollicksome drinking song in Canto VI there can be no doubt, for though some lines suggest the amphibrach, the anapaestic swing is unmistakable. There are, however, certain modifications:

Our vic|ar still preach|es that Pe|ter and Pou|le
 Laid a swing|ing long curse|on the bon|ny brown bowl,

That there's wrath|and despair|in the jol|ly black-jack,
And the seven|deadly sins|in a flag|on of sack;
Yet who|op, Barn|aby! off|with thy liq|uor,
Drink up|sees out|and a fig|for the vic|ar!

No doubt to many the above explanation of metrical schemes will prove confusing. Versification is not a simple matter to be mastered in a day. But if the reader patiently analyzes metrically poem after poem, in time he will learn to detect quite readily the intended swing of most lines and how they should be read to bring out the proper movement. Nor should it be forgotten that poetry is far more than rime and meter. The poet not only chooses a melody appropriate to his subject matter, but by combining words harmoniously brings pleasure to the reader's ear.

“Reading
maketh a full
man, conference
a ready man,
and writing an
exact man.”

Bacon.

" 'Tis the
good reader
that makes
the good
book."

Emerson.

